



Grant Details

95522 - FY21 Region/CVB Marketing Plan

101313 - Great Falls Montana Tourism 2021 Marketing Plan

DOC Office of Tourism

Grant Title: Great Falls Montana Tourism 2021 Marketing Plan
Grant Number: 21-51-019
Grant Status: Underway
Comments:
Applicant Organization: Great Falls CVB
Grantee Contact: Rebecca Engum
Award Year: 2020
Program Area: DOC Office of Tourism

Amounts:

Contract Dates:	Contract Sent	Contract Received	Contract Executed
Project Dates:	06/15/2020 Proposal Date	07/01/2020 Project Start	06/30/2021 Project End
Grant Administrator:	Barb Sanem		
Contract Number	21-51-019		
Award Year	2020		

Contract Dates

Contract Sent	Contract Received	Contract Executed	Contract Legal
Project Dates	07/01/2020	06/30/2021	
Project Start	Project End		

Comments Amendment Comments

Community & Brand Support

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

Great Falls Montana Tourism is the Destination Management Organization [DMO] focused on promoting the city of Great Falls, Montana to overnight visitors. It includes efforts of the Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Tourism Business Improvement District. Great Falls is the 3rd largest city in the Nation's 4th largest state. With 1 million residents in the State and just under 60,000 residents in the city, Great Falls Montana Tourism is focused on generating overnight visits from independent adventures and planners of meetings. As we plan for 2021, we are in uncertain times that will be taken day by day, then week by week, then month by month as the situation surrounding COVID-19 evolves. Our strategies and budget may change by July 1, 2020 as new data and guidance becomes available.

What remains constant is the reason overnight visitors travel to Great Falls. From every direction, Montana's spectacular, unspoiled nature calls to the traveler. Our community sits on the banks of the Missouri River in the center of the State. Great Falls is a basecamp to the Rocky, Big Belt, Highwood, and Little Belt Mountain Ranges; each providing public access for a variety of outdoor recreation. It is also a basecamp to the Sun and Smith Rivers; Belt Creek, and Holter Lake; it is 2.5 hours south of the East entrance to Glacier National Park, and 3.5 hours north of the North Entrance to Yellowstone National Park. One of the greatest things about our community is we are welcoming, down-to-earth, and proud of what we have. Great Falls is a place where guests, like our residents, feel more independent to pursue passions, from outdoor recreation to embracing the inner artist. It's a place where our guests can gain perspective, stay socially distanced, and truly renew the spirit.

STRENGTHS

Art | In the broadest sense of the term, Great Falls has art—from statutes and murals on the river's edge trail and downtown, to state parks and museums that capture our history and culture, to restaurants who source local food, to residents who create masterpieces on canvasses or using batik and our entrepreneurs who create industry-changing products. Great Falls is creative, innovative, and full of art.

River | The Missouri River connects Great Falls' history to the Plains Indians, Corp of Discovery, mining, and electricity. Today it provides access to outdoor recreation, bird viewing, a path for scenic drives, and a backdrop for stunning photography.

Basecamp | In about an hour or less from Great Falls, you can be in the Rocky Mountain Front and the greater Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex, Sluice Boxes State Park, and the Little Belt Mountains, the Highwood Mountains, on Holter Lake, at Smith River, Sun River. And, just a little further in Glacier National Park.

Malmstrom | 3,300 personnel, along with their families, are stationed in Great Falls' air force base. The base itself draws national contractor business, and the personnel's extended family come to visit.

GTF | Our international airport is small and accessible, offering direct flights from Seattle, Denver, Las Vegas, Minneapolis, Phoenix, Salt Lake City, and seasonally to Chicago.

WEAKNESS

Venues| Tried and true, our facility infrastructure is stable but suffers from deferred maintenance and lack of capital investment for industry demanding improvements.

Impression| Immediate thoughts of Montana include mountains, roaming wildlife, and backpacking adventures, and Great Falls is a modern community on the Missouri River with an industrial history.

Detractors | 34% of Great Falls residents hold a low-self image of and are negative about the community being a great place to visit.

OPPORTUNITIES

I-15 Corridor | Great Falls is roughly halfway between Salt Lake City, Utah, and Edmonton, Alberta (via Highway 2 in Alberta, Canada). Through traffic provides a chance to convert travelers for experiences and events. 55% of travelers drive through Great Falls without spending a night.

Air Service | United, Delta, Alaska, and Allegiant are great partners, however, there are opportunities to add carriers and direct flights. Some carriers are opportunistic during economic downturns and Great Falls will be ready to support them.

Events| Signature events give visitors a specific time to travel to Great Falls. We have room to add more even during COVID-19 with smaller events. With many being canceled, we will look to create smaller, impactful events for overnight visitors to attend.

In-Market Experience | The Missouri River is amazing; however, we are missing the opportunity to make it, and other experiences, easier to access. Great Falls can benefit from easy access equipment rentals, tour guides, facilitated experiences, and review worthy interactions.

THREATS

COVID-19 | We have already witnessed postponed, canceled, and rescheduled events, conventions, and meetings. The uncertainty of how long the current shelter-in-place and group size restrictions will remain, hinders travel. In addition, local businesses that support the tourism ecosystem will have taken dramatic losses and may not be able to continue operations or support the industry as they did. Recovery in our target markets may take longer than in Montana and could delay travel.

I-90/I-94 CORRIDOR | This Montana route has larger communities with larger population bases, sees higher traffic counts, and has had more success in event routing than I-15.

Market Economy | Volatility in the local economy of our target market communities can directly impact travel decisions.

Growth | The success of peer and benchmark communities related to increased retail experiences and capital investments in infrastructure have increased their tourism budgets to attract more visitors, causing Great Falls to lag.

Describe your destination.

Knowing what activities visitors like to experience, how they make decisions, and how to help influence the decisions at each stage all form the cornerstones to Great Falls Montana Tourism's marketing strategies. The Montana Department of Commerce's Office of Tourism and Business Development makes a significant investment to support the inspiration stage of the trip planning cycle. Great Falls Montana Tourism leverages that investment with joint marketing opportunities and using "Montana" in all communications. Our strategy starts by using paid and owned media to inspire overnight visitors with Great Falls' unique spectacular unspoiled nature and breathtaking experiences that can be had by day, such as:

- Giant Springs State Park
- Little Belt Mountains
- Missouri River
- Sluice Boxes State Park
- First People's Buffalo Jump
- Rocky Mountain Front
- Sun River

All the inspiration drives traffic to our website, where, as part of the orientation step of the trip planning process, Great Falls Montana Tourism provides infographics on direct flights, drive time, and distance from our target markets to support the message that making a trip to the city can be done in a day or less.

Great Falls Montana Tourism facilitates by delivering various trip ideas for weekends and multi-day vacations. This is where we will share the relaxing hospitality of our community to renew their spirit for the next day by showcasing:

- Local food establishments

- Live performing arts
- Micro Breweries
- Craft Cocktail Lounges

Optional: Include attachments here

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

Great Falls Montana Tourism's target markets will be staged in FY2021.

Leisure Travel

Stage 1 includes Montana Independent Adventurers and Historical Encounters age 30-65 from:

- Billings
- Missoula
- Bozeman
- Kalispell

The Independent Adventurer enjoys outdoor recreation, such as day hiking, nature photography, snowshoeing, skiing, fishing, river rafting, and kayaking. The Historical Encounterer appreciates history, such as military, mining, historic figures, and milestone moments.

Stage 2 includes Drive Market Independent Adventurers and Historical Encounters, age 30-65. Specific locations will depend on the COVID-19 recovery phase and status of travel restrictions within the market. Great Falls Montana Tourism will monitor recovery in:

- Lethbridge & Calgary, Alberta
- Spokane, Washington
- Boise & Coeur d'Alene, Idaho
- Bismark & Williston, North Dakota
- Rapid City, South Dakota
- Casper, Wyoming

Stage 3 includes Fly-Market Independent Adventurers and Historical Encounters, age 30-65.

- Denver, Colorado
- Seattle, Washington
- Salt Lake City, Utah
- Chicago, Illinois
- Minneapolis, Minnesota

Specific locations will depend on the COVID-19 recovery phase within the originating city and the status of travel restrictions within the market.

b. What are your emerging markets?

Great Falls's emerging markets are Food and Event Travelers and younger travelers age 25-30 from our current target markets. We also see the emergence of independent travelers from Texas and Oregon.

Optional: Include attachments here.

c. What research supports your target marketing?

Great Falls Montana Tourism collects a variety of data to help determine strategies. Attached is the specific research. We utilize:

- Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research
- VisaVue
- Arrivalist
- Expedia
- VisitGreatFallsMontana.org Analytics
- Facebook Analytics
- U.S. Border Patrol Border Crossings

Great Falls saw a slight decrease in overnight visitors in 2019, down 19,543 visitors from 2018.

Top 5 markets out of state overnight visitors came from:

- Alberta 14%

- Washington 7%
- Idaho 7%
- Colorado 6%
- California 6%

*Institute of Tourism Recreation Research

Our overnight visitors top 5 activities were:

- Scenic driving 58%
- Day hiking 32%
- Recreational shopping 31%
- Wildlife watching 30%
- Nature photography 27%

*Institute of Tourism Recreation Research

Our overnight In-State Traveler is arriving from:

- Billings 45%
- Missoula 40%
- Bozeman 38%
- Kalispell 21%
- Helena 17%

*Arrivalist

Our overnight visitors primarily arrive by vehicle [63%]. Spending continues to decrease, from \$198 million [2017] to \$184 million [2018]. Top spending categories include:

1. Fuel
2. Restaurants
3. Retail
4. Grocery
5. Lodging

*Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research

The Business traveler continues to trail the Leisure traveler, with only 13% of overnight visitors being here for a convention or meeting. We saw an increase in first-time visitors to 11%, over 7% the previous year.

*Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research

- Retain 90% of Current Members
- Get 75 NEW Members
- Get 4 NEW Conventions
- 45% Growth in Facebook Followers
- 45% Growth of Instagram Followers
- Establish 1,500 Twitter Followers
- Obtain 65% Room Demand of FY18

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

Great Falls Montana Tourism appreciates Joint Venture opportunities. With a limited budget, the opportunity to leverage it with the State spend is great. The types of Joint Ventures we look for are:

- Digital Paid Leisure Traveler Placement
- Social Paid Placement
- Paid and Owned Content
- Research
- Influencers
- Specific Market Efforts (Example: Paid Media in North Dakota)

Optional: Include attachment here. Traveler Research.pdf

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

Great Falls Montana Tourism will look for Joint Ventures with local Attractions, Dining Establishments, and non-profit partners. We will also be looking this year for Joint Ventures with Central Montana, Glacier Country, Missoula, SouthEast Montana, Billings, SouthWest Montana, Butte, and others. The types of Joint Ventures will be collaborative efforts on scenic drives, in-common unique features, and backyard exploring promoted through:

- Digital Paid Leisure Traveler Placement
- Social Paid Placement
- Paid and Owned Content
- Research
- Influencers
- Specific Market Efforts
- Organizational Websites

Depending on the Joint Ventures offered, Great Falls Montana Tourism would make adjustments to current budget line items to take advantage of the right opportunities.

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

We have partnered with Montana Department of Commerce's Office of Tourism and Business Development on Paid Digital Placement through Sojern, Trip Advisor, and National Geographic. Content through Interfuse and RootsRated. We have partnered with Great Falls International Airport on Canadian Print, Central Montana on Travel Booths and Research, Western Art Week Shows on Digital and Print Paid Placement, and with Great Falls Development Authority on video and photo content.

Sojern and Trip Advisor were successful based on the delivered impressions and reach. National Geographic wasn't as successful based on video engagement and reach.

Interfuse was successful with impressive time-on-site engagement with the content and the reach and impressions. Roots Rated didn't produce the engagement and the content wasn't inspired.

The Canadian Print didn't produce expected results of increased web traffic.

Travel Booths and Research have been successful. Travel booth increases engagement with direct market and reduces cost. Research shares expense and provides good insight.

Digital and Print Paid Placement and Video and Photo Content are successful because of the cost shares and increase in room demand during specific events.

Optional: Include attachments here.

Optional: Include attachments here.

Optional: Include attachment here:

Marketing Segment, Method & Budget

Marketing Segment	Marketing Method	Describe your method.	Provide supporting research/statistics.	How do you plan to measure success?	Provide a brief rationale for this method.	Estimated budget for method.	Marketing Method Evaluation	Add'l Attchmnt
		Great Falls Montana Tourism will place paid media through digital platforms to match our demographic, geographic and psychographic market segments. This could include banner ads driving traffic			Digital advertising has provided Great Falls Montana Tourism the ability to specifically target markets, where they are, monitor impressions and clicks. As the campaign			

Consumer	Online/Digital Advertising	<p>to specific content, weather channel mobile banner ads, video ads on outdoor adventure-based websites, videos on streaming television services, online audio ads through Spotify or Pandora.</p> <p>Specific media spends are determined in May and approved in June. Traditionally our total media spend has been roughly 20% Banner Ads, 20% Audio, 25% video lead-ins, 30% social, and 5% print.</p>	<p>Between July 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020, Great Falls Montana Tourism's full digital media placement has generated 5.9 million impressions and 21,959 clicks.</p>	<p>Success will be measured by impressions and click-throughs.</p>	<p>progresses, we can make adjustments to messaging, market spend, and content based on what we are learning. In general, it is a more responsive media spend and generates valuable reach and engagement.</p> <p>In the event the funding received is less than budgeted and dependent on the amount, we would cut administration expenses then we would make adjustments to spending in this line item.</p>	\$42,534.00		
Consumer	Social Media	<p>Great Falls Montana Tourism will place ads on a mix of social media that could include Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat and Instagram.</p> <p>Specific media spends are determined in May and approved in June. Traditionally our total media spend has been roughly 20% Banner Ads, 20% Audio, 25% video lead-ins, 30% social, and 5% print.</p> <p>In the event our budget increases, it is likely additional funds would be allocated to this method.</p>	<p>From July 1 2019 to March 31 2020, Social Meda placement has generated 69,053 clicks for a cost per click of \$0.51. Just our geographic, demographic, and psychographic banner ads in that same time period generated 1,957 clicks for a cost per click of \$6.35.</p> <p>According to ComScore, https://www.comscore.com/Insights/Presentations-and-Whitepapers/2017/The-2017-US-Mobile-App-Report, Facebook, YouTube, Facebook Messenger, Google Search, Instagram, and SnapChat are the most popular apps used by people aged 18+.</p> <p>Time spent on Social Media continues to increase, https://www.broadbandsearch.net/blog/average-daily-time-on-social-media.</p>	<p>Success will be measured by clicks and the percentage of video views.</p>	<p>Great Falls Montana Tourism has seen great engagement from Paid Social Media. Reactions to Social Media Ads also allow us the opportunity to grow our audiences within the channels.</p>	\$28,357.00		
					<p>Joint Ventures allow Great Falls Montana Tourism to increase their</p>			

Consumer	Joint Ventures	Great Falls Montana Tourism will use joint ventures to leverage its paid media by sharing costs with a partner.	Historic performance of Joint Ventures versus a stand-alone paid media spend.	Dependent upon the Joint Venture selected, however, could include reach, time on site, impressions, or site visits.	buying power and increase the number of people engaging with our marketing message. If the right Joint Ventures are offered. Great Falls Montana Tourism would consider adjusting budget line items to take advantage of the opportunity. If the total budget increases, Great Falls Montana Tourism would consider adding additional funds in this line item.	\$5,000.00		
Consumer	Travel Guide	Great Falls Montana Tourism will redesign a travel guide to provide online in a flappable format, as well in printed form.	According to ITRR research, 84% of Great Falls' overnight visitor is 55 years old and older. In 2019, Great Falls received 18,000 requests for Travel Guides for Great Falls. We distributed 30,000 visitor guides through Certified Folder, and 1,000 through our office.	Number of online views, mailed, and distributed through Certified Folder	The more heritage market is still interested in a concise document that inspires and orients them to our destination. With the establishment of a new creative approach to marketing Great Falls, our current highlight brochure doesn't reflect the new style. As our inventory is getting reduced of this document, it is time to redesign our travel guide.	\$3,657.00		
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	Great Falls Montana Tourism will have staff attend Tourism Advisory Council Meetings throughout the year and the Governor's Conference on Tourism.	Staff have learned of new programs, developed partnerships, and gained resources from previous attendance.	Success will be measured by attending.	Valuable information and networking to improve the organization is provided during the Tourism Advisory Council Meetings and Tourism Conference. Great Falls Montana Tourism will take what it learns during these	\$1,500.00		

					meetings to increase Tourism in Great Falls, Montana.				
Marketing Support	Administration	<p>Great Falls Montana Tourism will retain an Executive Director. The Executive Director will attend required meetings, manage marketing placement, oversee the budget, manage grants, submit reports, and other duties as needed to maintain the organization.</p> <p>In the event our funding is reduced from what is budgeted, this line item could be cut as Great Falls Montana Tourism is currently applying for grant funds to help offset personnel costs. This is dependent on applications made being funded.</p>	<p>During the period of time where the organization was managed by volunteers, deadlines were missed, meetings were not attended, audits took longer, and reports were not filed.</p>	<p>Success will be measured by the attendance of TAC Meetings, Montana Department of Commerce Office of Tourism and Business Development Partner Calls, timely financial report submission, completed audit, timely annual marketing evaluation report submission, timely annual marketing plan submission, timely completion of 990, successful and timely submission of an annual report, budget management, marketing management, and successful financial management.</p>	<p>Paid staff have provided better management of the organization, cleaner audits, and timely responses compared to a volunteer structure.</p>	\$19,348.00			
						\$100,396.00			

Marketing Method Evaluation Attachments

- Attachment 1
- Attachment 2
- Attachment 3
- Attachment 4
- Attachment 5
- Attachment 6
- Attachment 7
- Attachment 8
- Attachment 9
- Attachment 10

Marketing Method Budget

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Marketing Segment	Marketing Method	Bed tax funded budget	Non bed tax funded budget (optional)
Consumer	Joint Ventures	\$5,000.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Online/Digital Advertising	\$90,025.00	\$157,528.00
Consumer	Social Media	\$28,357.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Travel Guide	\$3,657.00	\$0.00
		\$127,039.00	\$157,528.00
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	\$1,500.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Administration	\$19,348.00	\$171,242.00
		\$20,848.00	\$171,242.00
		\$147,887.00	\$328,770.00

Miscellaneous Attachments

Description	File Name	File Size
2021 Marketing Plan and Full Budget Summary	2021 Marketing Plan and Budget Summary.pdf	1.5 MB
2021 Marketing Plan and Full Budget Summary	2021 Marketing Plan and Budget Summary.pdf	1.5 MB
Lodging Facility Use Tax Budget Pie Chart	CVB Budget Pie Chart.pdf	143 KB
Lodging Facility Use Tax Budget Pie Chart	CVB Budget Pie Chart.pdf	143 KB

Reg/CVB Required Documents

Description	File Name	File Size
2021 Marketing Plan Required Documents	Required Documents.pdf	504 KB

