



Grant Details

95522 - FY21 Region/CVB Marketing Plan

101304 - FY21 Visit Southeast Montana Marketing Plan

DOC Office of Tourism

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Community & Brand Support

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

We're Big Out Here

That is what a visit to Southeast Montana promises. Wide-open spaces. Historical stories. Deeply-rooted traditions. And, adventures as varied as stars in the vast night skies.

Out here, Big Sky meets big adventure. It's the kind of place to slow down and fall in love with Montana. It's the kind of place where cowboys still ride horses across the open plains. It's the kind of place where dinosaur fossils are waiting to be discovered and history is rooted in the land. It's the kind of place where visitors can steep in the myriad colors of a prairie sunset and feel the drum beat that nourished the indigenous tribes for generations.

This is Southeast Montana.

WHO WE ARE

A BRIEF HISTORY

Originally called "Custer Country," Visit Southeast Montana began in 1984 as an organization charged with helping bring tourists to the region. It was named for one of its most famous attractions, the Little Bighorn Battlefield. In 1987 the Montana Legislature enacted a 4 percent Lodging Facility Use Tax to fund tourism promotion organizations. At that time, Custer Country became one of six state-funded tourism regions in the state. This organization continued to market the 13 counties and two Indian Reservations of Southeast Montana until 2010. The Billings Chamber of Commerce received the contract from the Montana Department of Commerce to manage the region and the organization moved from Forsyth to Billings. In 2012, the Custer Country Board of Directors voted to change the name of the region to "Visit Southeast Montana."

From a traveler's perspective, it may seem like there is not much "out here" but the FY21 campaign will demonstrate otherwise.

THE ORGANIZATION

Visit Southeast Montana is a private, nonprofit organization managed by the Billings Chamber of Commerce. We serve as a voice for Southeast Montana's tourism and hospitality industries, seeking to promote the region's many attractions, events and communities while ensuring that tourism is recognized as one of the region's top economic drivers, especially when changes to local and state-wide legislation are considered. Visit Southeast Montana consists of two full-time staff members under contract with the Montana Department of Commerce and is directed by a board consisting of no more than 21 members from across the region.

Visit Southeast Montana partners with the region's three Convention & Visitors Bureaus (Billings, Miles City and Glendive) along with hoteliers, chambers of commerce and other tourism-related entities including state parks, county and federal organizations, plus private businesses ranging from coffee shops and restaurants to guide services, art galleries and private tour operators. The stakeholders and tourism partners of Southeast Montana provide the essence, flavor, identity and unique character of the region.

IDENTITY

Key Characteristics

This vast region, blessed with a diversity of people, geography and cultures, prides itself on connecting with visitors who enjoy our six very distinctive characteristics:

1. Outdoor Recreation

There is no doubt that opportunities for outdoor recreation abound across Southeast Montana – many exist on public lands and waterways. Fisherman will appreciate the world-class fishing opportunities available along the Bighorn and Musselshell Rivers, Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area (BCNRA) and the Paddlefish Harvest along the banks of the Yellowstone River near Glendive, along with an emerging bass fishery on the Yellowstone River. Hunters continue to pay premium prices to travel to the Powder River area to bag trophy deer and antelope. The Bull Mountains near Roundup are a rising star for elk hunters, and Eastern Montana is becoming known throughout the surrounding states for being great bird hunting country, allowing hunters to stretch their hunting season with pheasant, grouse, chukers, ducks and geese. Hiking and camping enthusiasts will relish the freedom and solitude of the Custer National Forest, Chalk Buttes, Terry Badlands and Medicine Rocks State Park, along with the fore-mentioned Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area. Makoshika State Park, Montana's largest state park, features some of the nation's most spectacular badlands scenery while the Terry Badlands remain pristine. The wide-open prairies of Southeast Montana region also boasts some of the darkest night skies – ideal for stargazing and planet observing – in the high plains of the inner Rocky Mountain region of the U.S.

2. Western Authenticity

Many states and regions like to think they possess true western culture, but in SEMT's rural communities, as well as the cities such as Billings and Miles City, visitors can get a true picture of everything that was right about the Old West. From Montana's largest state fair in Billings to feel-good, small-town rodeos, Southeast Montana communities have kept western hospitality alive. Standout western events include the Bucking Horse Sale in Miles City, the NILE and Chase Hawkes Rodeos in Billings and Little Bighorn Days in Hardin – from ranch rodeos to larger circuit Professional Bull Riders, the region hosts a rodeo almost every weekend of the warm season, plus plenty in other months. Authenticity is the key word when listing this strength. Simply traveling across the region solidifies that experience when a visitor may have to wait for cowboys to herd their cattle across the road or they experience the western lifestyle while visiting Southeast Montana's small communities and businesses.

3. Historical Significance

Southeast Montana contains a wealth of historical sites which are internationally known and are of great significance to the story of America. The Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, site of Custer's Last Stand and the nation's most famous Native American victory, is located in Big Horn County and is the third most-visited destination in Montana behind Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks. Pompeys Pillar National Monument bears William Clark's signature and is one the only remaining in-the-field, physical evidence of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

FY21 will see an enhanced Trail to the Little Bighorn, which is funded by the Eastern Montana Tourism Initiative, roll out as a centerpiece tourism product that connects the dots between the Little Bighorn Battlefield and related locations and sites across the entire region.

Many other state parks, museums and historic sites tell their own stories of pioneer life on the prairie, the Native American struggle to leave behind their nomadic way of life and the impact of the cattle trade on the American West. From large and well-

known to more intimate, all are part of the story of the American West and can be experienced in Southeast Montana.

4. Accessibility and Facilities

Southeast Montana is fortunate to contain two of the state's busiest highways, Interstate 94 and Interstate 90 that funnel drive-traffic directly into Southeast Montana, converging in Billings. Montana Highway 212, also called the Warrior Trail, cuts from Belle Fourche, SD, to Crow Agency, and offers a two-lane alternative into the region.

Located within a day's drive from the major metropolitan areas of Denver and Minneapolis-St. Paul, plus all of Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota and South Dakota, the Southeast Montana region is truly accessible for a vast drive-market. In FY21 Billings Logan Airport, which boasts United, Delta, American and Alaska/ Horizon Airlines direct service to 10 destinations, including seasonal direct service to/from Chicago, will complete a major expansion and remodel. Shoppers are also drawn to Billings, the state's largest city, for boutiques, burgeoning downtown district and major shopping centers. Lodging opportunities in Southeast Montana are incredibly diverse, including everything from 4-star hotels, to charming bed and breakfasts, RV parks, rustic camping, hunting and fishing lodges.

5. Dinosaur Adventure

The plains, prairies and buttes of Southeast Montana are dinosaur country. Famous dinosaurs taken from the Southeast Montana area of the Hell Creek Formation include Tyrannosaurus Rex, Maiasaura and Triceratops. Walk with the dinosaurs in Makoshika State Park and visit three museums and facilities that are active members of the well-established Montana Dinosaur Trail. The museums showcase the many paleontological treasures which have been discovered in Eastern Montana. Museums of particular interest to dinosaur enthusiasts include the Carter County Museum, Glendive Dinosaur & Fossil Museum, Frontier Gateway Museum and the Makoshika State Park Interpretive Center. Individuals and families can also opt for a private fossil dig or work with a paleo adventure in Makoshika State Park. This broad category includes fossil and rock collectors.

6. Native American Culture

When visitors from the eastern U.S., Europe, and Asia visit the West, they are innately curious about Native American culture. They grew up reading stories and watching the movies about the tribes that once dominated the American West. Southeast Montana is fortunate enough to play host to Crow Fair, one of the last great Native American cultural events, held annually on the Crow Reservation. This event gives visitors the opportunity to witness how Native American culture has evolved and the importance the tribes continue to place on their history and traditions. The Northern Cheyenne Reservation contains an incredible variety of historical sites, as well as opportunities to purchase hand-made gifts and educational experiences presented by local tour guides. The history of the region is inseparable from the history of the tribes who live in it to this day.

Key Challenges Facing the Region

1. Perception that Montana is far away and difficult to travel to.

According to the 2016 Montana Destination Brand Research Study by Destination Analysts, Montana is perceived as challenging to access with associated time and cost that prohibits visitation. Conversely, Colorado (the top regional competitor) was cited as the best destination in regard to scenic beauty, potential for vacation road trip, family-friendly environment, national parks, winter recreational activities and places "I most want to visit." However, Montana as a whole and Southeast Montana specifically are well-positioned to capitalize on Colorado's weaknesses: crowded attractions; lack of or losing authenticity; high costs and over-development. However, in the post-COVID crisis environment, this "far away" concept could prove to make Southeast Montana more desirable than other travel locations.

2. "Regions" are confusing.

Tourists typically do not travel via regions, but rather travel to destinations. That is where the identity starts. A marketing campaign that weaves destinations with geographic location will enhance the brand. Additionally, regional partnerships will help strengthen the brand within both the state and four-state region. While the Montana brand should, and does, include Southeast Montana, it is easy for the individuality of the region to be lost within the greater whole. The challenge is to be distinctive while still intertwined within the Montana brand.

3. Distances Between Services.

Today's traveler has higher expectations in terms of cellular service and connectivity to a global network. Conductivity and access to instant, digital information has been especially enhanced during the COVID Crisis. While the distance between towns and services are a challenge to Southeast Montana, that very element may also enhance its appeal in the post-COVID environment, as long as travelers know what to expect. For example, continuing the "We're Big Out Here" concept into a mini-marketing campaign that includes tear-off and downloadable maps and itineraries will entice travelers who desire "social distance" and open spaces.

4. Underdeveloped Tourism Product.

Research from both Destination Analysts and the Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research has identified outdoor recreation as a top activity for Southeast Montana's target audience. Despite the wealth of unspoiled nature available, little infrastructure exists for many areas. Strengthening partnerships within the region will help identify tourism products that need assistance for wayfinding, signage and potential promotion. Additionally, working with these partners to secure tourism grants from the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development may help overcome the funding obstacles. The Montana Office of Outdoor Recreation is also a key partner, as is Tribal Tourism.

In addition, we anecdotally hear that visitors want a "Western" experience, yet the region lacks tourism products like trail rides, guided tours/agri-tourism and the like. These types of products greatly enhance the visitors' understanding of the West. Visit Southeast Montana has and will continue to collaborate in all these efforts. However, please note that post-COVID, outdoor recreation will likely be an even more popular activity for locals and tourists alike, which may stress this under-developed product, especially public access points and lands.

5. COVID-19 Crisis

Likely this challenge does not need any introduction. At this time (April 2020), the Montana Governor's Stay Home Directive was in place until April 24. This challenge is, of course, ever-changing but the response to the COVID-19 Crisis will be far-

reaching, especially in the tourism industry. There is no roadmap for how it will impact tourism and travel as we explore the world post-COVID.

Describe your destination.

The typical traveler makes travel decisions in a three-phase process. These phases are Inspiration, Orientation, and Facilitation.

The **INSPIRATION PHASE** is the one in which the traveler is made aware of the general product and develops a desire to visit the destination. This phase is masterfully executed by the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development, which uses Montana's key tourism draws to bring nearly 12 million visitors to the state each year. Visit Southeast Montana reinforces this inspiration with region-specific images and video.

The **ORIENTATION PHASE** is where the traveller begins researching the details of his or her trip. This phase focuses on the route the traveler will take to arrive at their chosen destination and the mode of transportation they will use to get there.

The **FACILITATION PHASE** is where the traveler tries to find things to see and do at the destination and on the way to the destination. This may include planning alternate routes and overnight stays to break the drive up into manageable daily distances.

Visit Southeast Montana will focus on the Orientation and Facilitation phases. In this way we can target the 'low hanging fruit' already traveling through our region on the way to Yellowstone National Park and other Montana destinations. Additionally, we can emphasize how Southeast Montana fits with the Montana brand for outdoor recreation, for example, without the disadvantages like over-crowding and expensive fees found with other DMOs. Finally, we will also promote the Inspiration and Facilitation phases to regional travelers, including residents of central and western Montana along with drive markets in the post-COVID crisis. We have determined this will be the most effective way to target within our limited budget.

Optional: Include attachments here

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

Prior to the COVID Crisis, Visit Southeast Montana paralleled the target market identified by the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development, as identified here.

According to the 2016 Montana Destination Brand Research Study by Destination Analysts, the High-Profile Visitor (HPV) is not only attracted to Montana, he/she sees the destination as more attractive and competitive when compared to its regional competition. The HPVs are:

- City dwellers (not rural and not suburban)
- Married with children
- Well-educated
- Affluent (>\$80K)
- Younger (average age 36.4)
- Frequent travelers
- Male-oriented (54.3% male vs 45.7% female)
- Strongly attracted to and familiar with Montana's tourism offerings
- Likely repeat visitors
- Outdoor-oriented travelers (psychographic index)

The HPV's desired activity on a Montana trip relates directly to their psychographic profile of being outdoor-oriented travelers with these favored activities, as indicated in this graph.

10 of the top 12 Desired Activities all align with the SEMT's pillars.

Additionally, Destination Analysts identified two niche markets: Family travelers and history buffs. Both niches align with Southeast Montana's strengths, with history buffs fitting a cross-section of SEMT's historical significance, western authenticity and Native American culture.

Visit Southeast Montana will continue to build on these target markets – as budget allows; however, we will pivot to focus on niche markets as identified here.

NICHE MARKETS

Research conducted by the Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research supported a premise that many in the tourism industry have repeatedly stated: We – residents of Montana – love this vast, complex state and travel extensively throughout it. In fact, according to the 2018 Resident Travel in Montana report, including both resident and nonresident travel spending, total travel industry spending in Montana is \$6.23 billion dollars; 54 percent contributed by nonresidents and 46 percent by resident travel within the state.

Based on this data, Visit Southeast Montana will continue its post-COVID mini-campaign directed at the western side of Montana, identified as Bozeman, to Lewistown, and west. We will specifically highlight the Outdoor Recreation pillar including both soft (camping, kayaking, hiking) and rugged (hunting, fishing) activities for broad recreational appeal. In contrast to Montana's mountains, the badlands, breaks, buttes, canyons, coulees and flowing rivers of Southeast Montana offer unexplored opportunities for Montana residents and those in neighboring states.

According to the data requested from and compiled by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, hunting also bring non-resident travelers to Southeast Montana (FWP Regions 5 and 7) in October and November – specifically seeking big game. According to FWP non-resident hunters (seeking permits in FWP regions 5 and 7) consistently originate from Washington, Minnesota and California.

Arrivalist data supports this across the majority of Southeast Montana's counties. For example, Powder River County's (Broadus) numbers peak in October - November as shown here:

Both data sources re-enforce 1) Outdoor Recreation is a top activity or "reason to visit" while 2) Neighboring states (North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming) along with Washington, Minnesota and Colorado are top "arrival" markets.

ROAD-TRIPPERS

Also identified in the 2016 Montana Destination Brand Research Study by Destination Analytics, Inc., the road-tripper market includes travelers from Midwestern states who drive through the Southeast Montana region on the way to Yellowstone and Glacier national parks. We include RVers and campers in this niche market.

In the post-pandemic landscape of FY21, we will focus the limited budget on Denver, Colorado, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming and Minnesota, expanding into other Midwestern states as budget allows. Visitation data from Makoshika State Park notes that North Dakota and Minnesota are the top non-resident states-of-origin at Montana's largest state park. Minnesota also appears in Visit Southeast Montana's top five list of website visitation and also in travel guide fulfillment.

According to Destination Analysts traveler sentiment surveys during the COVID Crisis (week of April 13) after the crisis abates, American travelers will seek beaches (38%), then small towns and rural communities and attractions (30%). Only 20% cited national parks as their first trip post-pandemic. Few plan to travel by plane. as such, the road-tripper market will be incredibly important to the Southeast Montana region.

History Buff

With the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument averaging approximately 250,000 visitors per year and Pompeys Pillar National Monument matching the "Visit Lewis & Clark historical sites" as the number 5 Desired Activity on a Montana Trip (according to Destination Analysts 2016 Montana Brand Study), plus the soon-to-be-developed Trail to the Little Bighorn, Visit Southeast Montana will continue to market to the history buff in FY21.

INTERNATIONAL

The Montana Travel Trade office identifies the United Kingdom, Germany and Australia as top three target markets and Visit Southeast Montana will continue building these relationships, as this is low-cost investment for a higher-than-average return spend.

According to ITRR's 2018 Nonresident Visitation, Expenditures & Economic Impacts study, oversees visitors averaged \$1,186 per trip with an average stay of 5.5 days, compared to \$726 total per trip for an average of 4.59 days for domestic visitors. Therefore, aligning with the Montana Travel Trade Office's focus on UK, Germany and Australia makes sense.

b. What are your emerging markets?

Considering the plethora of outdoor adventure opportunities, in FY21 Visit Southeast Montana will continue to look at mountain bikers and OHV (off-highway vehicles) riders under Outdoor Recreation Pillar as emerging market, while adding birders as another emerging niche. According to a 2011 study, birders spent \$15 billion on birding with 52% of those expenses spent on food and lodging. In Wyoming more than 60% of revenue from birding came from non-residents.

Additionally, astrotourism (travel specifically related to nighttime viewing of stars, moon, planets, sky) has emerged as a viable market, with the plains and less rural areas having the greatest opportunities. We will work with Missouri River Country (project lead), Central Montana and MOTBD to develop an astro-tourism product as defined, funded and supported by the Eastern Montana Tourism Initiative.

Optional: Include attachments here.

SEMT_marketing funnel.pdf

c. What research supports your target marketing?

The report, *Montana: Destination Brand Research Study*, which was funded by MOTBD and completed by Destination Analytics, Inc. (attached) provides valuable information about the state's brand along with opportunities that align with Visit Southeast Montana's offerings.

SEMT also incorporates ITRR data, when applicable, to further enhance understanding of the target market along with newly-acquired data from Arrivalist located at <https://marketmt.com/Programs/Marketing/TourismResearch> (select Southeast Montana and/or county). While the region's visitation peaked in mid-summer, as expected, many counties actually had highest concentration of visitation in fall (late Oct - Nov), which is hunting season. By drilling down to the county level and observing

trends over time, we can better understand the impact this niche market has on the region along with where they originate.

Hunting and fishing target marketing research from the Montana FWP is shown below.

General Deer		General Elk		Turkey		Migratory Bird	
WA	4942	WA	2446	MN	96	WA	2446
CA	2934	CA	1984	WA	80	CA	1984
MN	2682	MN	1770	CA	58	MN	1770
WI	2023	WI	1324	PA	44	WI	1324
ND	1557	ND	1270	ND	40	ND	1270
PA	1412	PA	1102	WI	36	PA	1102

Visit Southeast Montana is intricately involved with the Eastern Montana Tourism Initiative and plans to fully integrate the results of this project into the regional marketing plan and budget wherever applicable, when the data becomes available.

Lastly, we will continue to keep our finger on the pulse of traveler sentiment in the post-COVID era via data from Destination Analysts Traveler Sentiment Surveys. For example, DA surveys during the COVID Crisis (week of April 13) noted that after the crisis abates, American travelers will seek beaches (38%), then small towns and rural communities and attractions (30%). Only 20% cited national parks as their first trip post-pandemic. Few plan to travel by plane, as such, the road-tripper market will be incredibly important for the Southeast Montana region.

1. Grow In-region Partnerships

A region as physically large as Southeast Montana is truly diverse, and as the foundation of Visit Southeast Montana, regional partners and stakeholders must be committed and strong. It is also within this diversity that the region's strength lies. In addition, as we pivot after COVID-19, being in tune with our tourism partners will be of utmost importance – as an "inventory" process (what products and services are available and how have they changed since the COVID crisis); as support; and as project partners.

To grow and further enhance those relationships, we will focus on:

FY21 ACTION

- a) Connect with more Tourism Partners and continuing the herculean effort to expand the Tourism Partner circle – new and existing – to realize the full potential of strong relationships and seek partnerships to leverage budgets for marketing projects.
- b) Spend quality time within the region, presenting Visit Southeast Montana's successes and emphasizing the advantages of working with the region on joint, no-cost ventures such as the website and authentic, fresh content. These quality interactions will also develop stronger inter-region communication to feed website, social media and earned media content.
- c) Evaluate Tourism Partner Workshop surveys from FY21 to develop additional, ready-to-implement topics and workshops for Partners. We will explore the idea of partnering with local economic development organizations.
- d) Reinforce Tourism Partners website, emphasizing the tools for Partners, such as ordering bulk guides, News You Can Use (eblasts) and no-cost business listings.

FY21 MEASUREABLES

- a) Track number of presentations (plus attendance at each) to in-region partners such as chambers, civic groups and the like. Give 4 presentations in FY21. Leverage that time in region for content creation (social content, blogs, website information).
- b) Increase visitation to Tourism Partner segment of new website by 10% and maintain open rate of 14.5% on News You Can Use (weekly e-newsletter).
- c) Conduct marketing workshop for Tourism Partners (in 1-3 locations across SEMT) with at least 22 attending each session.

2. DEVELOP MARKETING PARTNERSHIP

In the post-COVID world, with budgets reduced by 20-50%, marketing efforts will be ultra-focused on partnerships. Rather than be an island looking for visitors, we will seek opportunities outside the region to facilitate and strengthen relationships with neighboring states, regions and DMOs along with MOTBD bureaus and programs, particularly as it pertains to tourism product development. Additionally, we will:

FY21 ACTION

- a) Invite other Montana regions and CVBs to collaborate on initiatives targeted specifically to the History Buff market (i.e. battlefields or Lewis & Clark sites) or outdoor recreation, if possible. We will leverage the Eastern Montana Tourism Initiative projects like the Trail to the Little Bighorn; the Mon-Dak Motorcycle Loop (working name); and the Astrotourism project, for example, to create destinations within and spanning the region.
- b) Increase collaborative projects with Montana State Parks and/or Montana Dinosaur Trail, including advertising and/or earned media efforts.

FY21 MEASUREABLES

- a) Produce six thematic-specific itineraries and/or blog post (i.e. history) in collaboration with other regions. For example, astrotourism will be promoted as its own destination project but also promoted within Southeast Montana.

- B) Collaborate with Montana State Parks and/or Montana Dinosaur Trail to collaborate on at least (1) media opportunity or other destination project.

3. SUPPORT TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

We have identified weak infrastructure and lack of tourism product (such as trail rides, guided tours, dude ranches) as a weakness in the Southeast Montana region. Travelers expect the conveniences of home with an authentic yet urban edge to their experience. As thus, we will support the development of new tourism products, as allowed within regulations, plus share our knowledge, expertise and influence to move a project forward. Additionally, we will monitor legislative policies that could affect tourism.

FY21 ACTION

- a) Review the established public policy statement with the Committee and across the region, specifically during presentations (see above).
- b) Seek projects that need assistance or development. For example, adding additional locations to the Trail to the Little Bighorn within the EMI project or referring a potential rancher to the agri-tourism contact with Great Northern Development Corporation to further the process.
- c) Ensure that all legislators and county commissions are included on the Master Spreadsheet, share *News You Can Use* and invite them to attend regional presentations.

FY21 MEASUREABLES

- a) Share the public policy statement, which reflects Visit Southeast Montana's mission, with Tourism Partners via website and public presentations (as outlined in "Grow In-Region Partnerships" above).
- b) Complete the Trail to the Little Bighorn project.
- c) Work with at least (1) Tourism Partner to submit a grant for funding from MOTBD.

4. PRODUCE QUALITY MARKETING INITIATIVES

Visit Southeast Montana's marketing methods will continue to follow the Inspiration- Orientation-Facilitation strategy outlined in this Marketing Plan. Post-COVID, the marketing landscape will look very different; it will need to be nimble for a newly-evolving target market. Based on behaviors defined during the pandemic, consumers will want reliable information from trusted brands. Most consumers expect to find that information digitally.

A key component will be an intense focus on earned media and authentic messaging integrated across multiple platforms. This seamless melding of messaging will be subtle but consistent from advertising, to social media, to branding and collateral, to media relations and appeal to the ever-changing global market.

FY21 ACTIONS MARKETING STRATEGIES

a) MARKETING SUPPORT: Visit Southeast Montana will continue to operate out of the shared offices in Billings; the close proximity to Visit Billings staff facilitates collaboration and promotion of Southeast Montana when larger groups and tours stop in Billings or with media groups that move through the region. Additionally, we will continue to work with MOTBD's international market specialists to enhance the United Kingdom, German and Australian marketing efforts. Within the region, we will continue to serve our tourism partners both formally and informally by being a point of contact, sharing information from MOTBD along with social media opportunities, a quarterly newsletter and low-cost marketing strategies.

b) PUBLICITY, SOCIAL MEDIA & MEDIA RELATIONS: In the post-pandemic world of tourism marketing, we will pivot a bit to expand earned media in FY21, regionally, nationally and internationally, by selectively nurturing relationships, including publications/editors, freelancers and social influencers, that fit the Visit Southeast Montana pillars of outdoor recreation; western authenticity, historical adventure, dinosaur experiences and American Indian culture. These content creators will be restless from travel bans and eager to create new content for their dwindling stockpile. We'll start with a focus on the refined drive-market and expand into markets that match MOTBD's target market as budget allows. Cision services (earned media tracking & media/freelancer database service) are a key component to this strategy, as is utilizing staff's extensive journalism backgrounds

Blog content continues to be vital and will be repurposed into regional news releases; guest blogs are also ways to extend the reach of paid content with all being shared across all of Visit Southeast Montana's platforms.

c) CONSUMER ADVERTISING: This marketing method will also look different in the post-epidemic world. With an advertising budget cut by at least 50% and consumer changing behavior, we will shift to even more digital advertising and "advertorial" (combo buys that include ad and editorial scripted by SEMT). Along with Windfall, Visit Southeast Montana's agency of record, we will expand the creative of the "We're Big Out Here" campaign to emphasize the outdoor recreation assets and small town charm of the region, which matches Destination Analysts' summary of where Americans will travel post-COVID

d) PHOTO LIBRARY: Stunning imagery is a key element to the inspirational piece of the marketing funnel. Since FY19, we put a concerted effort into revitalizing the photo library, including making some photos available to Visit Southeast Montana's tourism partners. Additionally, we shot video while on photo shoots, to further leverage that budget. In March, 2019 we launched a general inspirational video across all channels, which we then refined in FY20. Moving into FY21, we will continue to expand the photo/video library as budget allows, with images and video that match the "We're Big Out Here" campaign. These images will be used across all platforms including social, paid and earned media in addition to printed materials, tradeshow support, fairs (as requested), e-newsletters, blog posts and the ever-expanding website.

e) PRINT PROJECTS: The Visit Southeast Montana Travel Guide is the foundation of all marketing efforts—it tells the story of Southeast Montana. This piece has evolved from being a bi-annual guide with no advertising to an annual, private-fund project with a sophisticated magazine-style format. In FY21, we will again leverage private funds to produce and print the guide but use marketing funds to ship and distribute this keystone piece, which functions as the heart of SEMT's print collateral.

Additionally, we will develop and print other collateral to fit niche markets. For example, thematic itineraries, like history, as developed for the travel guide and website can also be printed for distribution via VICs or mailing. As budget allows, we will upgrade and redesign the birding brochure for that pre-identified emerging market. Producing collateral across channels (print and digital) and in conjunction with other CVBs and/or Regions, further stretches marketing dollars.

f) TELEMARKETING/FULFILLMENT: The travel guides and other collateral must get into the hands of the traveler. To facilitate that, we have dedicated funds fulfillment and distribution (contracts to be considered as they approach renewal dates). Additional collateral (such as thematic maps and itineraries) will be available from distribution center, regional VICs and via download from the website. Tourism Partners can also order the travel guide in bulk

g) WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT AND OPTIMIZATION: In FY18, Visit Southeast Montana's agency of record, Windfall, created a new website, which "scrapes" content from VisitMT.com but still allows for more creative and timely control at the region's level. In FY19 the website was further built out and optimized and we added the blog/e-newsletter component. In FY20, we continued to add to the site. In March of 2020, with the launch of the modified "We're Big Out Here" campaign for only two weeks (it was paused mid-March due to COVID-19 travel bans), we experienced all-time high website traffic. We know this marketing method is being used by consumers.

In FY21, we will continue to strengthen the site by adding content, images and video, both via the blog and with more layers of information, keeping the site fresh and up-to-date, evolving as new tourism products develop. Additionally, funds will be

used to continually enhance SEO and other optimization techniques.

FY21 MEASURABLE

- a) Host 5 media tours/social influencer visits.
- b) Increase social media numbers, i.e. followers, engagement, shares by 7%.
- c) Increase number of consumers in database by 3,000 and maintain open rate of 17%
- d) Increase earned media with goal of 2 customized pitches/month, resulting in 8 national articles/segments and 15 regional articles/segments.
- e) Update website and increased traffic numbers by 25%.
- f) Establish CTR on digital media of .30%.

In summary, Visit Southeast Montana will pivot in the post-pandemic marketing landscape with a focus on being solid yet flexible and true to the Southeast Montana region. We will leverage increased earned media and publicity efforts with ultra-focused advertising in FY21 with the detailed marketing strategies outlined in this plan following the budget demonstrated below

- Shift to emphasize the power of earned media in a post-pandemic world.
- Modify advertising to drive markets and expand as budget allows.
- Use skill-set of internal team to create stronger, more nimble, yet genuine content for cross-channel promotion.
- Continue to build-out and optimize southeastmontana.com as foundation of regional marketing.

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

In FY21 we would like to continue working with the MOTBD on co-ops in national print and online publications. We have found the online co-ops with the state to be particularly effective in driving traffic to our website.

In addition, we would like to work with MOTBD to elevate Visit Southeast Montana via traditional journalists and social media influencers/bloggers/photographers/videographers, particularly those who focus on lesser-developed outdoor recreation opportunities, similar to those offered in the SEMT region; history buffs; road trippers; and the niche markets of mountain biking, OHV/ATVing and birding.

Co-ops in the form of journalist and tour operator fam trips through the Visit Southeast Montana region have also been beneficial and we would like to see those continue along with attending the Rocky Mountain International Roundup show.

We are open to all opportunities, including non-traditional and experimental marketing methods, particularly those those align with Road Trippers, History Buffs and other markets identified under Niche and Emerging Markets.

Optional: Include attachment here.

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

Considering the post-COVID travel environment, we would be interested in any of the following:

How well do you know your home state (in-state travel);

Thematic maps/itineraries for state-wide (i.e. explorers; Bozeman Trail; bootleggers; small-town U.S.A.; patriotic/military; historic theaters)

Regional fams targeted to road-trippers

Prairies vs Mountains -- we have it all in Montana (social media campaign)

To the Parks - Mount Rushmore - LBBNM - YNP - GNP - Theodore Roosevelt National Park

We are open all ideas and suggestions.

Overall, Visit Southeast Montana will consider any and all Joint Ventures, especially those outline above or those relating to emerging markets

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

As noted above, the Montana Dinosaur Trail, which includes three locations in Southeast Montana and has regional support, is an excellent example of a successful Joint Venture; it continues to move forward in a robust fasion. This consortium recently collaborated to update the Trail's website (via a tourism grant) plus create a video of each of the 14 facilities. In 2019, the Trail had its record visitation year (359,680 travelers visited 14 locations) over a 15 year span, plus it was a record year for passport completion. Since the Trail promotion program began in 2005, visitation has increased by almost 148,000 visitors, a 70% increase or average of 5.2% growth per year.

In September of 2019 (early in FY20), Visit Southeast Montana partnered with Visit Billings and most other Montana DMOs to welcome ~550 travel bloggers to Billings, Montana. Visit Southeast Montana hosted 5 pre-fam wiith 42 bloggers; 7 bloggers on the post-fam and 38 bloggers during the speed networking session.

In the past, we have engaged in out of home, national print, national and regional online, Fam Tours and trade shows with MOTBD and FWP. Of these the online, fam tours and tradeshow components were the most successful, though we wouldn't consider any of the co-ops we've engaged in with the state to be failures; some are simply stronger than others but all have benefit.

Optional: Include attachments here.

Optional: Include attachments here. SEMT_FY20-21 Budget.pdf

Optional: Include attachment here:

Marketing Segment, Method & Budget

Marketing Segment	Marketing Method	Describe your method.	Provide supporting research/statistics.	How do you plan to measure success?	Provide a brief rationale for this method.	Estimated budget for method.	Marketing Method Evaluation	Add'l Attchmnt
Consumer	Online/Digital Advertising	We will employ digital advertising to promote Visit SEMT to all targeted markets identified in the FY21 Marketing Plan during all three phases of the travel decision process. The strategy includes native ads, some banner ads and re-targeting, plus digital paid content. Online advertising will be mainly regional/drive-marketing during the Post-COVID era and will direct traffic directly to the Visit Southeast Montana website and, in some cases, to the SEMT Facebook page. Additionally, we will actively seek opportunities to partner with MOTBD, other regions, CVBs and other partners (like Montana Audubon) in an effort to leverage limited funds in FY21.	We know that digital advertising has the flexibility to be at the right location at the right time. A recent study by Deloitte found that Americans collectively check their smartphones nearly 8 BILLION times per day -- that provides ample opportunity for Visit Southeast Montana to be in front of the identified target throughout the entire travel-decision process, from inspiration on forward. According to <i>Digital Advertising</i> , 70% of website visitors who are re-targeted with ads are likely to visit your site.	Success will be measured by comparing to FY20 metrics, for year-over-year trends. Additionally, we will measure Visit SEMT's website analytics with a goal of remaining the same or improving during the Post-COVID era.	After COVID, Americans are more linked to their phones and digital world than ever before. Plus, using the "both/and" philosophy described under "Print Advertsing" we will combine print with digital to compliment each other in the FY21 Media Plan.	\$82,078.00		
		If the budget allows, we would use Out of Home (OOH)	Data from Phocuswright shows					

Consumer	Billboards/Out-of-Home	advertising to strategically place Visit Southeast Montana inspirational imagery and messaging in front of the regional drive-market audience, which is the specific target in the Post-COVID era.	that 38% of tour and activity bookings are happening on the same day or up to two days before the activity. Many of these bookings take place in-destination, while consumers are already traveling.	We will use traffic counts to determine the success of Out of Home Advertising, along with landing page analytics, if applicable.	As of May, 2020, the price of fuel is low and that tends to increase the likelihood of car travel, as will the COVID Crisis. OOH is an appropriate tool to reach car travelers.	\$100.00		
Consumer	Multi-Media Marketing	In today's marketing world, a multi-channel approach frequently produces strong results. This is a placeholder for a multi-media opportunity.	This is simply a placeholder - information to be provided if/when the method is implemented.	This is simply a placeholder - information to be provided if/when the method is implemented.	This is simply a placeholder - information to be provided if/when the method is implemented.	\$100.00		
Consumer	Social Media	Social media and peer influence are an integral part of the travel planning process. Visit Southeast Montana manages a presence on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Content is also tied to the website blog and e-newsletter in a multi-channel approach. In addition, prior to COVID, we were gaining momentum promoting our tourism partner's Facebook events.	Americans spend more time than ever watching videos, browsing social media and swiping their lives away on their tablets and smartphones. American adults spend more than 11 hours per day watching, reading, listening to or simply interacting with media, according to a new study by market-research group Nielsen. That's up from 9 hours, 32 minutes just 4 years ago. (Market Watch August 4, 2018).	Our goal is to increase social media traffic by 7%. While this is ambitious, we feel that the post-COVID world will continue to be connected and social media is big part of that those connections.	This marketing method will be combine in practice with Social Media under Marketing Support. Facebook usage has dropped to 66% of the market and we will look at additional channels like Pinterest and YouTube in FY21.	\$6,500.00		
Consumer	Ad Agency Services	Visit Southeast Montana's Agency of Record (AOR) works closely with us on many aspects of our marketing plan, starting with strategy and moving through to execution and finishing with tracking and analysis. We communicate our desires during an annual strategy session and utilize the AOR's great media power.	ROI is a key component in measurement. The return on investment for an Agency is revealed by how much they save in media buying while simultaneously creating and implementing a strong and effective marketing plan.	Prior to COVID, we depended on media ROI to measure success. In FY21, we'll again look at ROI (cost of AOR vs how much saved by their media buying power) but also consider maintaining advertising and website statistics the same or better than FY20 as a secondary measurement.	The return on investment for an Agency can be realized by how much the AOR saves in media buying while simultaneously creating and implementing a strong media plan that drives the marketing plan. Additionally, a strong AOR will bring innovative marketing methods to its clients - this will be important in the post-COVID crisis landscape.	\$70,000.00		
		As an important element of Visit Southeast Montana's media mix, regional media will primarily promote events and weekend/short-vacation travel. Some ads may be produced as JV with MOTBD, others in conjunction with regional partners. For example, collaborative efforts within-region can maximized budget while intra-region	Print is still a relevant advertising platform, particularly for niche target audiences. Consider the following statistics for print products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Americans spend an average of 15 minutes reading a magazine on a daily basis in 2018. (Statista) Affluent magazine 					

Consumer	Print Advertising	<p>collaboration will provide a bigger picture of Southeast Montana within the tourist's National Park itinerary (i.e. the road-tripper audience as identified by the 2016 Montana Brand study and further detailed in the attached Visit Southeast Montana Marketing Plan). Other niche markets like history buffs or sportsmen/women also fit well with the print medium. Additional print ads may focus on niche and/or emerging markets, specifically mountain bikers, OHV riders and birders (as identified under "Emerging Markets"). In the Post-COVID world, we'll use print specifically to reach the drive-markets identified earlier in the marketing plan.</p>	<p>readers are likely to spend \$5K to \$10K on vacations. (MagazineMedia)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 61% of consumers trust newspaper advertisements, compared to 42% for online. (JPLocalBusiness) For each \$1 spent on advertising, 4.8 people are impacted on magazines, followed by TV (0.8) and internet (0.3). (PRWeb) For each dollar spent on magazines advertisement, an average return of \$3.94 is expected. (MagazineMedia) 	<p>Success will be measured based on circulation and readership. Additionally, we will track website traffic and the combined media plan reporting for an over-all look at marketing plan success.</p>	<p>We consider print and digital to be a "both/and" rather than an "either/or." By that we mean that the combination of print and digital don't compete, they compliment.</p>	\$30,000.00		
Consumer	Electronic Adv - Newsletter, E-blast	<p>In FY21, we will continue to frequently e-blast our newsletter to to inform those in our consumer database ,sharing interesting tourist attractions in SEMT, as well as upcoming events. This keeps blog content fresh and relevant. This strategy will be used in conjunction with social media, blog, news releases and hallmark event promotion.</p>	<p>It has been proven that email marketing is the king of the marketing kingdom with a 4,400% ROI and \$4 4 for every \$1 spent, as noted on CampaignMonitor.com.</p>	<p>We strive to maintain a CTR of 17% on the eblasts. In addition, the e-newsletter drives traffic to the website, so those analytics may also be considered when determining the success of this marketing method.</p>	<p>Our e-newsletter is part of our multi-channel approach where we promote fresh, inspirational content via e-blasts, blog, social media and news release. Content is created almost solely by Visit Southeast Montana marketing staff and may include multiple mini-campaigns. We also incorporate photos and/or video into this marketing segment (as described under Photo/Video), giving visual inspiration.</p>	\$3,000.00		
Consumer	Printed Material	<p>This line item provides for funds to produce targeted print pieces promoting more specific aspects of Visit Southeast Montana. These print pieces may include, but are not limited to thematic itineraries and a birding brochure. Additionally, these items could include cooperative efforts with</p>	<p>Print remains a viable and important piece of tourism marketing, most espeically the Orientation and Facilitation part of the funnel. Consider that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brochures, maps and travel guides are the #1 in-market influence. (Bentley University) 65% of tourists used brochure display racks during travel. (BrochureManagement) 65% of tourists plan to purchase tickets and merchandises after picking up a brochure. (Bentley University) <p>Additionally, our own research</p>	<p>Success will be measured based on reports from staff attending events where the pieces are handed out, along with quantities distributed and/or attendance. Optionally, if we use a landing site URL on the specific piece, we will track those web analytics to determine whether the printed product is driving traffic to the SEMT</p>	<p>Supplementary printed materials will compliment and work in conjunction with the expanding Visit Southeast Montana website. Or, we may opt to create and print niche pubs for ultra-targeted audiences (i.e. emerging market of birding).</p>	\$8,000.00		

		intra- and inter-region organizations. The budget also shipping and costs for the FY21 travel guide.	conducted at travel trade shows and other events has shown that small, targeted pieces grab attention. For example, we gave away ~ 1,500 thematic maps over 2 days at the 1-19 Northwest Sportshow in Minneapolis -- potential visitors were very interested in the region-specific scenic map. By producing smaller pieces with more specific information that meets the needs or wants of the reader, they will be more inspired to take action.	website.				
Consumer	Travel/Trade Shows	<p>Travel tradeshows are appointment-based shows and target international tour operators. The Great American West Roundup International Conference is only for tour operators/receptives who focus on the five - state region (MT, SD, ND, WY and ID) and offers an excellent opportunity to develop relationships with these quality operators.</p> <p>In this marketing method, building relationships over time and keeping Southeast Montana's opportunities in front of these operators is an on-going process. Over the recent years, we have noticed more interest in routing from YNP to TRNP in North Dakota -- with a perfect transition through the SEMT region. Additionally, conversations in May of 2019 about astrotourism and International Dark-Skies Association sparked great interest.</p>	<p>According to ITRR's 2017 Nonresident Visitation, Expenditures & Economic Impacts study, Oversees Visitors averaged \$1,1865 per trip with an average stay of 5.5 days, compared to \$726 total per trip for an average of 4.59 days for Domestic Visitors. Therefore, aligning with the Montana Travel Trade Office's focus on UK, Germany and Australia makes sense and has the potential for a strong ROI.</p>	<p>We can measure success by tracking attendance and/or meeting numbers (in the appointment-style shows such as Great American West Roundup), noting the time spent interacting one-on-one with the tour operator, including follow-up communication.</p>	<p>During the Great American West conference, we ask the operator specific questions about their clients' needs or ask the traveler what interests them (outdoor adventure, history, Native American culture, dino trails, dining/night life, etc.) and tailor our responses to specifically and accurately promote what Southeast Montana offers that coincides with their wants and needs. The tour operators are always asking, "What is new?" and by being present, we can answer and increase interest during personal dialogue. It is important to note that these international shows/meetings are relationship-building over time.</p>	\$1,500.00		
Consumer	Photo/Video Library	<p>Inspring still and video images are integrated into every aspect of Visit Southeast Montana's comprehensive marketing plan. For example, an image may be placed in print advertising, digital advertising, the travel guide, the website and in eblasts and blogs. The same images may be used during one-on-one meetings to inspire international operators to work a location into a tour itinerary or the video will be used</p>	<p>Studies show that while people only remember 10% of things they hear and 20% of what they have read, around 80% of people remember things they see or do. And, <i>Simply Measured</i> found that there was not only a 46% increase in</p>	<p>We will measure this method on a cost per photo basis, with goal of purchasing quality photos at or less than \$500 (on average) while maximizing the budget. We can also measure video (completed and distributed via paid promotions) via digital analytics.</p> <p>Advertising is a multi-faceted beast and a successful advertsing campaign works, in part, because of strong and message-integrated images/video. While most photographs are simply part of brand</p>	<p>In marketing and advertising, images are the backbone of a solid campaign, with video rapidly becoming the crown jewel. We will continue to acquire resh images and video, while still maximizing the budget to build a robust and diverse photo</p>	\$7,000.00		

		<p>across social media platforms.</p> <p>Additionally, we will incorporate photo/video rights into social influencers agreements when and where possible, thus stretching those dollars. We will continue to work with AOR to shoot video and still images, based on the marketing 'wants and needs' list.</p>	<p>content engagement for brands but an additional 65% increase in photo and video engagement</p>	<p>lift and new creative, some images, particularly those shared via social media, can be measure by analytics as can those on <i>southeastmontana.com</i>. However, without stellar images, Visit Southeast Montana's message would be only words and thus, would struggle to inspire.</p>	<p>library.</p>			
Consumer	Website/Internet Development/Updates	<p>A website is amazingly dynamic and this strategy includes continuous optimization, plus SEO and SEM to assist with organic searches and placement. in March of 2020, southeastmontana.com hit record traffic with nearly 15,000 unique visitors and 36,380 page views.</p>	<p>Research has shown that the most commonly used source for travel planning is online research using DMO websites and other online sources.</p> <p>According to TrekkSoft.com's <i>Travel Trend Report 2018</i>, 82% of tour and activity bookings processed by TrekkSoft take place on a company's website or mobile app, with 64% being researched and booked by women (with 64% being age 34 or younger). Additionally, AARP's <i>2017 Travel Trends Report</i>, notes that 41% of Boomers will book at the airline/hotel/car website.</p>	<p>Success will be measured based on increases in key web analytics.</p>	<p>A vibrant, fresh website is simple crucial in today's environment. To be without is suspect and, frankly, likely considered "not legit."</p>	\$20,000.00		
Marketing Support	Administration	<p>In our FY 21 Marketing Plan Budget, Visit Southeast Montana is budgeting the full 20% allowable for Administrative Expenses. Our strategy in doing so is to take a conservative stance in terms of how much of the Administrative Budget will ultimately used. By budgeting for the full 20%, we don't run the risk of going over budget for allowable Administrative expenses.</p>	<p>This recommended and allowable by TAC Rules & Regulations.</p>	<p>Success for this method is difficult to measure. As long as the administrative side of SEMT continues to run smoothly, and the funds are used in a responsible matter, we will continue the method to be a success.</p>	<p>Administrative expenses, including mileage reimbursements for travel to stakeholders and events across this vast region, are necessary for the fulfillment of Visit Southeast Montana's mission.</p>	\$85,245.00		
Marketing Support	Marketing/Publicity Personnel	<p>Visit Southeast Montana will employ a full-time Marketing Direct plus a full-time Marketing Specialist in FY21. The Marketing Director is responsible for implementation of marketing and public relations projects as assigned. A full job description is attached. The Marketing Specialist works in conjunction with the Marketing Director and will develop, manage and monitor publicity and communications</p>	<p>Our research has shown that it is necessary to market a region to travelers in order to encourage them to visit and to see sights and attractions which might not otherwise be known to them. Marketing staff is necessary in order to facilitate the many projects and tasks needed in order to accomplish this, in addition to managing the Agency of Record.</p>	<p>Success will be measured dependent on annual marketing goals set by the SEMT Board of Directors. Marketing Personnel are also evaluated annually by John Brewer, CEO of Visit Southeast Montana.</p>	<p>These positions are a very efficient and cost effective means to handle our marketing. The value of the local knowledge of the region, relationships with stakeholders and familiarity with events cannot be overstated.</p>	\$104,700.00		SEMT Marketing Specialist.pdf

		projects and programs, including social media. Complete job descriptions are attached.						
Marketing Support	Joint Ventures	Visit Southeast Montana considers the Joint Ventures line item a vital budget segment because it is basically a "2 for the price of 1" opportunity, plus Joint Ventures allow us the look both within and beyond the region to work with partners. These funds are specifically designated for use in joint marketing projects with lodging tax entities, including CVBs, Regions, the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development or related entities like Montana State Parks. This is will be especially important in FY21 as we navigate the Post-COVID world of tourism marketing. We are especially interested in JVs for advertising but also for earned media, as that will be a big focus in FY21.	Mathematically, by participating in Joint Ventures, Visit Southeast Montana will double its investment -- leveraged or matched funds go farther, so this \$5,000 budget line becomes \$10,000 or more.	Plans to measure success for projects utilizing Joint Venture funds will be determined, depending on the details of each project.	Collaboration simply makes sense. Joint Ventures also foster the partnering relationship that remains vital across the state. The 14-year-old Montana Dinosaur Trail is an excellent example of an incredibly successful Joint Venture Project with 334,544 individuals visiting rural communities across northern and eastern Montana. The combined effort of many entities made this possible.	\$5,000.00		
Marketing Support	Cooperative Marketing	As previously stated, collaboration makes sense. In the past Visit Southeast Montana has offered Cooperative Marketing Grants to non-profit tourism related businesses throughout the region Successful applicants must demonstrate that the project (for which funds are being requested) will benefit Visit Southeast Montana as a region. All TAC regulations must be met in order for funding to be given and the committee favors new projects and events over others.	Using the Survey in a Box to understand intricate details about event attendees or visitors to an attraction will greatly benefit both the grantee organization but also Visit Southeast Montana as a region. The more data we have, the better we can market.	Plans to measure success for projects utilizing Cooperative Marketing funds will be made depending on the details of the project, as approved by the Visit Southeast Montana grants committee. In previous years, typical measurements included increased attendance at events, increased paid admission to a facility or creation or improvement of a tourism entity. In FY21, with the focus on survey data, a completion report detailing event visitor data will be consider a success.	In FY21 the Visit Southeast Board has reduced the budget (post COVID) to allow for research projects, mainly Survey in a Box from ITRR. However, if funding allows, the Board may increase the budget for this marketing method.	\$2,000.00		
		Staff from Montana's tourism regions are required to attend the Montana Governor's	A valuable network allows individuals to share information as well as know peers, thus saving time and money when working collaboratively. Operating in a silo is counter-productive. Attending TAC meetings and the Montana Governor's Conference	Success will be measured by	Funds are need for car rental/mileage, lodging, meal			

Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	Conference on Tourism and Tourism Advisory Council meetings. This line item sets aside funding to allow us to do so	on Tourism provides information peer training and familiarization along with an opportunity to learn new marketing or management tools at a relatively low cost. Additionally, research indicates that attendance at the TAC meetings is required by Rules and Regulations.	attendance at TAC meetings and the Montana Governor's Conference.	per diems and other misc. during travel to TAC meetings and Governor's Conference.	\$2,500.00		
Marketing Support	Marketing Plan Development	Revieing the marketing plan on an annual basis is vital, especially in this age of post-COVID, when traveler sentiment is rapidly changing. As we develop our annual marketing plan for Visit Southeast Montana, we need funds for related activities such as travel, printing, creative design and the like.	According to managementhelp.org a strategic plan should be reviewed at least every three years. However, TAC Rules & Regulations required Montana's DMOs to review and update plans annually.	If we successfully craft, submit and have a plan approved, this marketing method will be considered a success.	We may also need funds to purchase additional research and/or assign Agency staff to research and analyze the data.	\$500.00		
Marketing Support	Research	This line is simply a placeholder for potential research project(s), particularly one in conjunction with a CVB or another region.	This is simply a placeholder. Rationale will be provided if the segment is employed.	To be determine if/when a research project is embarked upon.	This is simply a placeholder. Rationale will be provided if the segment is employed.	\$100.00		
Marketing Support	Outreach	We will use this segment to offer support to Visit Southeast Montana's Tourism Partners and build internal (regional) awareness. This fits the "...educating our residents about the economic benefits of tourism" segment of Visit Southeast Montana's mission statement. Plus, it just makes sense. Visit Southeast Montana has offered marketing workshops for the past three years. The workshops are well-attended and provide another touch point between our staff and tourism partners and also between partners within the region. We will consider partnering with local economic development organizations in FY21 to blend marketing with business strategies.	By offering our expertise and marketing support to Visit SEMT's Tourism Partners, we strengthen the entire region and industry. This collaboration logically flows directly into the Visitor Facilitation piece of the funnel.	We will track attendance at workshops, presentations and meetings along with post-workshop surveys to determine success.	Social media trends and digital marketing changes on an almost daily basis. Keeping our tourism partners up to date is vital.	\$2,000.00		
Marketing		This is a placeholder. To be provided if method is	TBD if method is implemented.	A fully-developed Crisis Communication Plan is the desired	To be provided if method is implemented.			

Support	Crisis Management	implemented.		outcome.		\$100.00		
Marketing Support	Opportunity Marketing	Opportunities that arise will be considered by how it fits within the existing marketing plan, media plan and budget.	To be determined if/when the opportunity arises.	To be determined prior to implementation and Opportunity Request.	To be determined prior to implemented and included in the Opportunity Request.	\$100.00		
Marketing Support	Fulfillment/Telemarketing/Call Center	<p>This method covers expenses to field inquiries (calls, email) from potential visitors and provide them with requested printed material via mail. Expenses include agency fees, shipping, postage and storage.</p> <p>This method also covers the cost to distribute the Visit Southeast Montana travel guides to locations across Montana, Wyoming and South Dakota, primarily to locations frequented by travelers.</p>	<p>According to nonstop signs.com, travelers do gather information while "on the ground" in their travel destination. Consider that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brochures, maps and travel guides are the #1 in-market influence. (Bentley University)• 65% of tourists used brochure display racks during travel. (BrochureManagement)	Success will be measured based on the number of calls and/or email inquiries fielded and material sent. Additionally, we will track travel guide quantities and rack locations	<p>Our ads and printed material, plus the website, feature a toll-free number encouraging travelers with questions to call and/or request a travel guide. It's important we continue to provide this service to potential visitors. We add the collected email addresses to the Consumer e-blast database, continuing to grow that communication line.</p> <p>Additionally, we distribute travel guides to locations throughout Montana, Wyoming and South Dakota to keep that inspirational and guiding piece at the forefront of travelers' minds.</p>	\$36,500.00		
Marketing Support	VIC Funding/Staffing/Signage	As the Eastern gateway to Montana, it is vital that the VICs warmly receive and assist visitors, at least during the warm season. This marketing method offers grants to the VIC to help them maintain operations and/or pay for improvements (within the TAC's Rules & Regulations) so they can better meet the needs of guests. This will be especially important in the post-COVID era when personal contact is important, yet "distant."	Research conducted by the Montana Office of Tourism has shown that VICs are important and that it is vital to provide VICs and their staff with the tools and knowledge they need to provide a good experience to the visitor. Without support from Visit SEMT, these VICs would have drastically reduced staffing/open hours.	Success will be measured based on feedback from the VICs, which is gathered from first-hand experiences and signup information sheets from visitor interaction, that will be submitted in report format and will included total numbers of seasonal visitors.	We support VICs in Hardin (Big Horn Co); Broadus (Powder River Co.) and Wibaux (Wibaux Co.). A visitor's personal experience is vital in encouraging them to try new adventures that they may not have on their itinerary or to encourage a return trip.	\$15,000.00		
Publicity	Social Media	Funds in this segment support efforts in the social media realm including social media influencers, event promotions or "boosts" and other ways to enhance organic social media content throughout the region. This strategy may also include paid social media to specific target markets or events and travel for staff to create	<p>Research also shows that social media, including social media influencers, supports brand lift, places opportunities in front of followers and inspires "followers" to act. Nearly 70% of people would rather learn about products through good content. And 68% of consumers spend time reading blog content and other content from a brand that they find interesting.</p> <p>Additionally, according to the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Center for Marketing Research, 77% of millennials make a purchase both online and in-store after viewing something on</p>	Social media analytics will provide a solid measure of success as will increased attendance at promoted events or offerings. Plus, quality social media content continually provides a strong brand boost.	Social media continues to gain in popularity and markets. While the majority of content will be created and/or gathered in-house, we will sometimes contract with social influencers to supplement and gain access to different audiences. Plus, social media is an ever-changing, ever-growing platform that allows for creativity and experimentation, often a "soft" forerunner of trends. In addition, when Visit Billings hosted the Travel Blog Exchange in FY20, we experienced a huge jump in social traffic and engagement across the region.	\$5,000.00		

		social media content.	Facebook. <i>Fluent</i> noted that the top three social media for Millennials and non-Millennials (age 35+) are Facebook, YouTube and Instagram.					
Publicity	Fam Trips	<p>This method sets aside funds for familiarization tours through Southeast Montana for tour operators, journalists, bloggers, free-lance writers, video producers, photographers and other content creators. It also includes promotional giveaways for welcome packets given to specific individuals or groups visiting the region plus includes a placeholder for film recruitment. These fam tours are often performed as a co-op with MOTBD or with other tourism entities including CVBs.</p> <p>The value of WOM - Word of Mouth - marketing cannot be fully understood (although some methods do try to monetize each "produced piece"). It is traditional and long-trusted. We will employ significantly more effort into WOM in the future.</p> <p>In addition, as we navigate the post-COVID travel marketing landscape, fam trips will be a vital component of sharing information about what the Southeast Montana region offers - within the state, regional, nationally and internationally.</p>	<p>Research also shows that earned media, an article or video produced by a journalist, retains stronger media value than paid advertising. A Nielsen study shows that 92% of consumers believe suggestions from friends and family over advertising. WOM - Word of Mouth - is a crucial component of a comprehensive campaign. In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have a 434% higher chance of being ranked highly on search engines if you feature a blog as part of your website (Tech Client). Businesses using blogs as part of their content marketing mix get 67% more leads than those who don't (Hubspot). Bloggging drives audience to the website. Research shows that 75% of users don't scroll beyond the first page of search results. 52% of respondents on a recent content marketing survey agreed that blogging is their most critical content marketing tactic. Bloggging was followed by email newsletters (40%), social media content (40%), then ebooks, in-person events, and webinars. 	<p>Success will be measured based on earned media (articles, videos, blogs and the like) written by hosted journalists, photographers and other content creators. We use cision to both connect with media and to monitor media (see Publicity/Press Promotions/Media Outreach).</p>	<p>Fam tours are an important method of educating potential tour operators to bring groups into SEMT. Operators rarely are willing to add an area to their product line unless they have experienced it personally.</p> <p>Fam tours remain an important PR tool in that journalists can be provided with unique experiences. These experiences often result in articles being written by journalists in various publications which can be worth tens of thousands of dollars, if not more, in media impressions and credibility. Photographers and video producers are included in this group - this inspirational component will be amplified.</p>	\$7,000.00		
Publicity	Press Promotions/Media Outreach	<p>Public relations, earned media and media tracking are all strategies that allow Visit Southeast Montana to stretch the marketing dollar. Hosting media events for new tourism products or collaborating to bring media to a major or new event will leverage even more dollars into trackable product. This strategy compliments the Fam strategy. As we navigate the Post-COVID landscape, this</p>	<p><i>Marketshare</i> notes that word-of-mouth has been shown to improve marketing effectiveness by up to 54%. And, again, Nielsen study shows that 92% of consumers believe suggestions from friends and family more than other advertising.</p>	<p>We will measure success by the quantity and quality of articles, blogs, content, images and video produced directly from our PR and media efforts.</p>	<p>This strategy includes coopertively contracting a media monitoring and database service with Visit Billings. This massive database allows us to mine for writers, bloggers, influencers and the like to cover very specific topics. For example, we can vet the database for freelance writers/journalists/bloggers/influencers/videographers who specialize in outdoor adventures in area that offer limited access and support.</p>	\$13,200.00		

		marketing method becomes even more important as we can have significant impact from WOD (word of mouth) versus traditional advertising.						
							\$507,223.00	

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

Marketing Segment	Marketing Method	Bed tax funded budget	Non bed tax funded budget (optional)
Consumer	Ad Agency Services	\$75,000.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Print Advertising	\$55,500.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Online/Digital Advertising	\$108,449.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Billboards/Out-of-Home	\$17,000.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Multi-Media Marketing	\$100.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Social Media	\$6,500.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Electronic Adv - Newsletter, E-blast	\$3,000.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Cooperative Marketing	\$2,000.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Printed Material	\$10,000.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Travel/Trade Shows	\$1,500.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Website/Internet Development/Updates	\$25,000.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Photo/Video Library	\$7,000.00	\$0.00
		\$311,049.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Administration	\$97,063.00	\$0.00

Marketing Support	Marketing/Publicity Personnel	\$95,808.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Joint Ventures	\$5,000.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	\$2,500.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Marketing Plan Development	\$500.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Research	\$100.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Outreach	\$2,000.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Crisis Management	\$100.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Opportunity Marketing	\$10,000.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Fulfillment/Telemarketing/Call Center	\$36,500.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	VIC Staff/Customer Service Training	\$15,000.00	\$0.00
		\$264,571.00	\$0.00
Publicity	Social Media	\$5,000.00	\$0.00
Publicity	Press Promotions/Media Outreach	\$13,200.00	\$0.00
Publicity	Fam Trips	\$7,000.00	\$0.00
		\$25,200.00	\$0.00
		\$600,820.00	\$0.00

Miscellaneous Attachments

Description	File Name	File Size
SEMT Marketing Director	2019 SEMT Marketing Director Job Description.doc	1.3 MB
SEMT Marketing Director	2019 SEMT Marketing Director Job Description.doc	1.3 MB
FY21 SEMT Marketing Plan	SEMT 20-21 Marketing Plan_high res_050120.pdf	25.5 MB
FY21 SEMT Marketing Plan	SEMT 20-21 Marketing Plan_high res_050120.pdf	25.5 MB

Reg/CVB Required Documents

Description	File Name	File Size
Required Docs from Visit SEMT (contract, etc.)	FY21_Required Docs.pdf	777 KB

