



Grant Details

108656 - FY22 Region/CVB Marketing Plan

113962 - FY22 Billings CVB Marketing Plan

DOC Office of Tourism

Grant Title: FY22 Billings CVB Marketing Plan
Grant Number: 22-51-012
Grant Status: Underway
Comments:
Applicant Organization: Billings Chamber of Commerce/Convention and Visitors Bureau
Grantee Contact: Alex Tyson
Award Year: FY22
Program Area: DOC Office of Tourism
Amounts:
Contract Dates: Contract Sent 06/16/2021 Contract Received 07/01/2021 Contract Executed 06/30/2022
Project Dates: Proposal Date 06/16/2021 Project Start 07/01/2021 Project End 06/30/2022
Grant Administrator: Barb Sanem
Contract Number: 22-51-012
Award Year: FY22
Contract Dates

Contract Sent	Contract Received	Contract Executed	Contract Legal
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Project Dates 07/01/2021
 06/30/2022

Project Start	Project End
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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?

Billings, Montana:

Billings, population 110,000, is the county seat of Yellowstone County and the largest city in the state. As Montana's Trailhead, it is the region's economic hub. Major industries including agriculture, energy, healthcare, finance, education, and tourism drive the local economy. Popular attractions locally include the Rimrocks or rock formations which surround much of the community and offer space to take in incredible views of the region and recreate. The city also boasts a walkable brewery district in historic downtown Billings, Montana's only zoo and Botanical Park, contemporary and western museums, galleries, several theaters, music venues, a state-of-the-art public library, and a number of outdoor community venues and festivals.

Billings offers nearly 50 miles of multi-use trails and 24 miles of bike lanes. From the Rimrocks to the Yellowstone River, which is the longest free-flowing river in the lower 48, residents of Billings invite visitors to experience the magic of Montana's Trailhead. Billings sits near the intersection of Interstates 90 & 94 and offers a first-class airport with numerous daily flights to major U.S. cities via Delta, United, American Airlines, Allegiant, Frontier, and Alaska Airlines. Regional carrier Cape Air, also plays a crucial role in air travel and connectivity in the state. Amazing summer weather and snowy winters with blue-bird days offer ample opportunity for outdoor enthusiasts to experience all four seasons and the accompanying adventures. Nearly 4,500 hotel rooms as well as numerous retail and restaurant offerings (Billings offers an incredible food scene), flexible meeting space, and sports venues are ready to accommodate any traveler or planner's needs and preferences.

The community brand promise for Billings as Montana's Trailhead is:

Shaped by the Yellowstone River and sheltered by the sandstone Rimrocks, Billings is a place of forever views and forever memories, where urban amenities and modern conveniences meet - where the adventure of the untamed wilderness and history are right outside your door. Conveniently positioned in southeast Montana as the largest city between Calgary and Denver, as well as Spokane and Minneapolis, Billings proudly serves a trade area of more than 500,000 residents with diverse shopping, award-winning cuisine, arts and culture. Warm, genuine people take the time to welcome you and greet you with a smile. Billings offers unparalleled access to some of the most breathtaking natural and historic wonders in the United States including Yellowstone National Park, the Beartooth Scenic Byway, Bighorn Canyon Recreation Area, Little Bighorn Battlefield and Pompeys Pillar National Monuments, as well as amazing state parks. The region is an idyllic destination for those seeking out the best that Montana and the western U.S. offers.

Visit Billings:

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

The Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19) and Visit Billings:

With the widespread roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines and flexible cancellation policies, travel confidence is moving in a positive direction. The past 12+ months have created pent-up demand and a surge of travel, particularly for less-populated areas that offer recreation and exploration adventures without constant crowds. Billings and southeast Montana are ideal destinations as the travel and tourism industry works toward recovery. As noted in FY21 strategies, travel and tourism at Montana's Trailhead thrives on recreation, exploration, learning, competition, and

networking. Travel restrictions and social distancing left many people confused and unsure of travel, but as the warm season of FY22 approaches, Visit Billings' strategies encourage people to re-engage and choose Billings as their vacation destination, while increasing awareness for Billings as the perfect trailhead for their western adventures. Upon the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Visit Billings team worked from a strong structure based on responsibility and resiliency. Today, the Visit Billings staff is actively managing the organization with its boards and helping the destination through this ongoing but continuing crisis through strong marketing and sales strategies. For example, the Visit Billings team is leveraging its owned channels such as social media to stay engaged with repeat and prospective visitors. Tourism management continues to be important as staff evaluates how the organization can be best positioned in the future. As staff, board members, and Visit Billings' agency of record (Sunshine & Bourbon) continue navigating the organization in light of budget reductions and priority adjustments, new perspectives are being applied to ensure all opportunities are being leveraged.

Visit Billings' staff members remain focused on: RELATIONSHIPS, RESOURCES, REEDUCATION, RECOVERY, AND RESILIENCY

RELATIONSHIPS: Communicating with and accommodating meeting planners, tour operators, and sports tournament directors who either cancelled or postponed events in Billings continues to be a priority during this recovery phase. Staff members prioritize communication with stakeholders, tourism partners, and volunteers as well. At the onset of the pandemic, staff supported peers, colleagues, and neighbors with the "Billings is Strong - #HospitalityStrong" efforts. As we move further toward recovery, those relationships are critical to the success of our industry, and we will continue to support one another.

RESOURCES: Communication to potential visitors regarding all resources available is still a priority. For example, the COVID-19 section at VisitBillings.com is consistently updated as new information becomes available. Staff are fulfilling traveler information requests to engage with travelers, ultimately helping to increase visitation appropriately. As travelers seek out Billings' travel information via mail, email, website, call, or text, those requests are fulfilled expeditiously. The Visit Billings team is helping travelers better understand why they should choose Billings, while showing them how to best enjoy the area and reimagine their itineraries.

REEDUCATION: As consumers begin to travel again, Visit Billings is reeducating re as to why they should select Billings and Montana as their destination to visit and begin their western adventures. The brand responsibly reemerged in summer 2020 and the Visit Billings team responsibly promoted the destination throughout the fall and winter season. In FY22, our marketing strategies will advance to the next level knowing the competition among destinations is going to be fierce as tourism recovers. The marketing strategy will continue to emphasize the Great American Road Trip as data shows travelers are still seeking out road trips to less-populated destinations. At the same time, the national marketing strategy will evolve as the flight markets recover and the passenger numbers for the direct flights grow. Visit Billings regional and national marketing campaigns are fully integrated, including the Visit Billings social channels which provide travelers with inspirational messaging as well as content that focuses on responsible travel. As the travel landscape evolves, how Visit Billings staff conducts business must also evolve. Travelers' motivations and habits have and will continue to change. Business plans and strategies have been, and will continue to be adjusted. Innovation remains key in the reeducation and reimagining of travel.

RECOVERY: Being funded by hotel tax and assessments, travel data like Smith Travel Research's occupancy reports allow staff and the agency to monitor recovery and growth, while assessing the budget and evaluating additional marketing and sales opportunities. Assessing and reassessing the pandemic's impact on the Visit Billings' budget, as well as on the industry locally and in the future, is a constant task. The organization's role in recovery, and in helping to reset the local economy, is still relevant today. Adapting the budget was a first priority and remains such. Strength in leisure travel during this recovery is key and funds are poised to help execute leisure marketing and other segments accordingly to grow visitation to Billings. These efforts help support stakeholders and the hospitality industry. Visit Billings is rebuilding visitor volume through strategic marketing campaigns that differentiate the destination among the competitive set, while communicating with visitors sensitively and responsibly. According to the Destination Analysts' Coronavirus Travel Sentiment Index Report from February 21, 2021, approximately 60% of respondents indicated they are ready to travel, with or without some hesitation, in anticipation of the vaccines being widely available. June, July, and August were noted to be the most likely months to travel. In mid-March 2021, the Transportation Security Administration said the number of people flying in the United States had eclipsed the year-ago level for the first time in the pandemic period. These are all strong signs of travel growth, yet there are still variables like the COVID-19 variants that make travel unpredictable. For Visit Billings, projecting the lodging tax revenue and TBID assessments to protect mission, is, and will be, a priority as the recovery progresses and resiliency leads.

RESILIENCY: Visit Billings, with tourism partners and community leadership, will recover from this pandemic by continuing to support each other. As we know, the COVID-19 pandemic decimated the travel industry and local stakeholders, with the cancellations and postponements of sporting events, group business, meetings, and leisure trips. Travel restrictions and the loss of transient lodging demand - with at least three temporary hotel closures in Yellowstone County - harshly impacted funding for Visit Billings as well. While some travel resumed in 2020, it is only now in 2021 that we are seeing a much stronger intent to travel among consumers, with occupancy numbers and demand beginning to edge near pre-pandemic levels albeit inconsistently. That being said, relationships, resources, and reeducation will help lead the destination through this recovery while supporting one another professionally and personally will help the community rebound from difficulties created by the pandemic. Billings' tourism and hospitality industries are remarkably resilient.

The Montana Brand:

It's important to note the crucial role a state tourism brand plays in destination marketing. The marketing strategies and programs led by the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD) help boost not only Montana's tourism brand, but also those brands of Montana's cities, towns and regions. In spite of challenges the COVID-19 pandemic presents, it's as important as ever that MOTBD foster the Montana tourism brand and get people excited about visiting Montana and doing business in Montana destinations. Visit Billings works to align with MOTBD brand pillars and strategies in all the integrated marketing efforts where feasible and appropriate. The MOTBD brand pillars, which will help identify and guide areas of opportunity in travel promotion, are as follows:

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

STRATEGY II: HIGHLIGHT AND HELP DEVELOP VIBRANT AND CHARMING SMALL TOWNS THROUGHOUT MONTANA.

STRATEGY III: INTEGRATE NATURE AND TOWNS TO OFFER AND DELIVER A BALANCE OF BREATHTAKING EXPERIENCES AND RELAXING HOSPITALITY.

Throughout this application, it is stated how Visit Billings works to align itself with the strategies of the Montana brand. Clearly Billings isn't a charming *small* town as noted in strategy II, but the destination's downtown is charming and offers some of the region's best options for every personality to Forge Their Own Path while visiting. Visit Billings boasts a *Path for Any Personality* offering and promoting access and options for arts and culture aficionados, history buffs, outdoor enthusiasts, foodies, roadtrippers, shopaholics, and wellness access.

In closing of this section, Visit Billings guides visitors to Forge Their Own Paths. Leveraging the destination as Montana's Trailhead, Visit Billings' 'Forge Your Own Path' brand invites visitors to plan and participate in a memorable journey that is authentic to the big sky experience.

SHAPED BY THE YELLOWSTONE RIVER. BORN IN THE SHADOWS OF THE RIMROCKS. WELCOME TO MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD.

BE GUIDED BY THE GREATNESS THAT LIES AHEAD. BIG SKIES AND BIG THINGS. FORGE YOUR OWN PATH.

Describe your destination.

THREE PHASES: THE MONTANA TOURISM TRAVEL DECISION PROCESS: INSPIRE, ORIENT, FACILITATE

According to the current Montana Tourism and Recreation Strategic Plan, the best way to consider how the potential traveler considers and contemplates trip planning and execution of an itinerary are listed below.

While these pillars and phases remain relevant in a COVID-19 pandemic recovery, Visit Billings will adjust marketing efforts as needed to accommodate the safety and security of visitors.

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

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

ORIENTATION: The relative physical position or direction of something.

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

THE INSPIRATION PHASE is where the traveler is made aware of the general product and develops a desire to visit the destination. The Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD) is responsible for the foundation of this marketing mindset via Montana's brand image, per the strategic plan. MOTBD markets Montana's key tourism pillars to encourage potential travelers to visit the state with inspirational imagery and copy. MOTBD's strategy focuses on Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks as well as adventures – which aligns with the outdoor recreation travelers are seeking, and even more so due to the pandemic. Therefore, in the inspirational phase, Billings must strategize to position the destination as a viable city to include on one's itinerary. Efforts by MOTBD to elevate eastern Montana towns and attractions will assist with this phase for the region. Billings is well situated between the historic landmarks of southeast Montana and the awe-inspiring landscapes of the Yellowstone River valley. Working to compliment MOTBD efforts, Visit Billings leverages stunning imagery, targeted messaging and compelling calls to action in the integrated marketing materials including the Great American Road Trip campaign which speaks well for those visitors who are re-engaging in travel. Billings boasts access to the Beartooth Highway which Charles Kuralt called "the most beautiful drive in America." As a destination, Billings offers stunning vistas via the sandstone Rimrocks and access to the Yellowstone River, which are all reasons to choose southeastern Montana as part of one's route. Targeted marketing and out-of-home (OOH) programming aim to help boost Billings as a must-stop city along western and national park trips. Regionally, Billings is the perfect vacation destination for many neighboring communities. Ongoing "weekender" campaigns will inspire and invite the driving audience to explore and enjoy all Billings has to offer in entertainment, outdoor activities, cultural, and historic interests and recreation. Visit Billings will emphasize this focus as part of the Great American Road Trip campaign, as more people are embarking upon getaways by vehicle in the year ahead.

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

VISITBILLINGS.COM: The Visit Billings website is the destination's primary branding and communications tool, where the destination's "Forge Your Own Path" brand has been brought to life to orient potential visitors. Throughout the pandemic, it was key to communicating the destination's mitigation efforts and "open for business" messaging. In today's digital landscape, destination marketing websites must work even harder to engage the consumer. While travelers filter through user-generated content (UGC), TripAdvisor reviews, Instagram posts and travel blogs, a destination website should be positioned as a trusted resource for travel inspiration and planning. VisitBillings.com is designed to ensure the content is consistently updated and relevant to the individual needs of potential travelers. New persona-driven web content is developed to guide prospective History Buffs, Outdoor Enthusiasts, Foodies, Shopaholics, Arts & Culture Aficionados, and Wellness-Seekers to Billings. Simultaneously, the Great American Road Trip microsite also inspires travelers to hit the road and choose Billings as their vacation destination. Recently, the site was audited to ensure it was providing the greatest experience, speed, and functionality for users and travelers. The website also is a clearinghouse of sorts for COVID-19 safety resources for travelers to Montana and Yellowstone County. The COVID-19 landing page is a key element in easing the minds of visitors who may be looking for local case counts, testing locations, and general COVID-19 information.

VISIT BILLINGS VISITOR GUIDEBOOK: The Visit Billings Visitor Guidebook is available digitally via the website and is mailed at no-charge upon request. The Billings guide focuses on the "Forge Your Own Path" branding and encourages travelers to seek adventure and live life to the fullest around every corner. With the assistance of beautiful imagery, maps, recreational listings, and more, Visit Billings' focus is to provide accessible and authentic information. There is no advertising included in Visit Billings publications or collateral materials.

BILLINGS LOGAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (BIL); Visit Billings is working closely with Billings Logan International Airport to monitor the emergence of travel by air during the pandemic recovery. Prior to the COVID-19 shutdown, the Billings airport launched its four-year, \$57 million remodeling project to expand the capacity of the facility and offer a modern look and feel with more capacity for partners. With flight travel resuming, Visit Billings is highlighting carriers offering direct flights in markets that include Denver, Minneapolis (MSP), Seattle (SEA), and Dallas/ Fort Worth (DFW), Chicago (ORD), Portland, Phoenix, San Diego, and Salt Lake City (SCL). Cape Air is also an important partner in the regional leisure market serving smaller eastern Montana communities where residents may choose to fly to Billings to shop, schedule services, and enjoy entertainment.

THE FACILITATION PHASE is where the traveler seeks experiences en route to a destination and during a stay. DMOs, communities, and organizations must all work together to make visitors aware of the full array of experiences available to guests. The Visit Billings team is knowledgeable, welcoming, and on-the-ready to facilitate visitor queries via phone, text, or email. The goal is to foster successful stays and future Montana travels. The Visit Billings staff keeps an open dialogue of communication and information with tourism partners, area hotels, attractions, businesses and the community to provide exceptional customer service for visitors. This initiative is spearheaded by the Billings Trail Guide program of Visit Billings. This civic-minded program works to unite and motivate the Billings community in raising the bar and level of service for visitors. It provides frontline employees training and support so they can easily communicate and provide hospitality and experiential options for visitors in and around Billings and southeast Montana. Visit Billings continues to foster connectivity within different social media platforms by offering visitors current and relevant content via Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok. Visitors also are invited to engage with the #VisitBillings brand throughout their journey.

Optional: Include attachments here

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

WARM SEASON STRATEGIES:

As Visit Billings enters FY22, there are two specific hurdles. First, Visit Billings must find the visitors who are once again traveling despite the uncertainty of the pandemic. The second hurdle is the competitiveness of the market. With good news regarding the vaccines, DMOs around the country are preparing to spend large budgets to persuade visitors to choose their destination. Already, keyword search budgets are increasing and destinations are introducing large-scale campaigns to the market. It is imperative to ensure Billings is a top choice amongst travelers as they begin determining where they will go for summer vacation. It also will be important to take into consideration any new offerings among key competitors. For example, Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport introduced a new \$26.5 million addition of a second concourse, adding five new gates and 75,000 square feet to Montana's largest airport. In Missoula, Alaska Airlines announced its plans to begin new daily service from Missoula to three destinations in California - San Diego, San Francisco and San Jose - beginning March 2021. With the start of 2021, there is a sense that the worst is now behind us. Vaccines are being distributed, travelers' sentiment is more positive and people are eager to leave their homes and start exploring again. However, it still will take time for things to return to normal, although the definition of normal will never be the same. Yet even the industry is beginning to feel positive once more. Dax Schieffer, director of Voices of Montana Tourism, shared his thoughts with the Billings Gazette: "The state's tourism industry may be well positioned to rebound in 2021. With cruise ships and indoor venues still seeming unsafe, the outdoors are a healthy option. Fewer people flying has increased the airline industry's interest in serving more remote places like Montana."

GOALS

1. Increase awareness for Billings as an ideal spring/summer travel destination, leveraging the destination's brand, "Forge Your Own Path."
2. Increase awareness for the big skies, unspoiled outdoor adventure, a unique urban downtown and hospitality offerings all found in a visit to Billings - while reminding visitors that Billings, Montana is the most scenic route into Yellowstone with incredible proximity to iconic attractions.

3. Encourage visitors to experience the culinary and cultural offerings in the city of Billings paired with the natural attractions surrounding the city.
4. Drive unique and repeat traffic to the website with a strategy that leverages digital and video-driven channels.
5. Integrate the Great American Road Trip into the campaign that also speaks to visitors in the flight markets, targeting both drive and flight markets.
6. Stay flexible to evolve the campaign as necessary based on travelers' ongoing response to the pandemic situation.

Billings' safe, welcoming vibe and deep roots in Western culture and Native American heritage set it apart from its competitive set. It is a place for new experiences, where one can find new ways to experience the familiar. The destination gives access to uniquely powerful encounters with the natural world, alongside the comforts of modern life. This is what visitors are seeking in 2021. The marketing campaign should introduce them - or remind them - of the adventures that can be found along the Rimrocks and the Yellowstone River. The campaign will give them a sense of the unique vibe found only in downtown Billings, with the only walkable brew trail and a nationally-renowned new sloth exhibit at ZooMontana - combined with the comfort that travelers are seeking in hotel offerings. It will be critical to re-engage with visitors and remind them why Billings should be their first choice when choosing a vacation destination, with its proximity to an array of outdoor wonders, historic monuments and local arts, cuisine and culture providing a unique experience unlike any other in the competitive set.

Visit Billings also aims to align with MOTBD's messaging to increase Billings' exposure. MOTBD's primary messaging positions Montana as a place for free-spirited adventure, a place for new experiences where one can find new ways to experience the familiar, and a place where one has access to uniquely powerful encounters with the natural world, as well as the comforts of modern life. Their marketing highlights the unique scenic beauty (sweeping mountain ranges, big sky ambiance and diverse geography). Billings is the center of all the best that Montana has to offer.

TARGET AUDIENCE

After a year of uncertainty, turmoil and impacts on the organization's budget, Visit Billings will execute a national campaign this year as flight markets are recovering. Flexibility will be important for the media campaign, to ensure dollars are spent where they are generating the most response. Behavioral targeting will focus on the domestic traveler - those looking for a long weekend escape from their metro area, those interested in nature-related trips, and those looking for a rural escape into their surrounding outdoor paradises.

The target audience is families with a household income of \$75,000+.

The geographic markets will include the following:

PRIMARY: Key feeder markets include Minneapolis, Denver, Salt Lake City, Chicago and Dallas with interest in travel to Montana and the western region of the U.S., including monuments, state and national parks and western heritage.

SECONDARY: Regional close-in drive markets, primarily in state and Wyoming. Bozeman, MT; Great Falls, MT; Helena, MT; Missoula, MT; Minot-Bismark-Dickinson, ND; Rapid City, SD; Casper, WY; Buffalo WY; Sheridan WY; Billings DMA (excluding city of Billings) + city of Gillette, city of Cody.

REGIONAL YEAR-ROUND STRATEGY:

Billings is Montana's largest city and, with that, the opportunities are endless. From arts and culture to food scenes and history to outdoor recreation, it is easy to fill days with unique experiences. Regionally, Billings is the city travelers will crave as it offers the hustle and bustle of a city without the huge crowds. Cultural attractions such as concerts and art galleries, as well as a culinary scene that features unique farmers markets, walkable breweries, restaurants and more will engage visitors. The regional year-round strategy is designed to highlight experiences that can't be found for hundreds of miles and is customized so that it speaks specifically to each unique traveler, encouraging them to "Forge Your Own Path" while exploring the city and the region.

GOALS

1. Increase awareness of “things to do” in Billings for the regional audience.
2. Establish a sense of urgency around seasonal events and attractions as they begin to return.
3. Continue utilizing the creative assets and messaging of the Great American Road Trip, while leveraging “Forge Your Own Path” as the umbrella brand position, inviting prospective visitors to experience Billings.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Creative messaging will incorporate messaging that emphasizes: “Two days off. Time to turn it on.” This messaging encourages state residents to take that weekend escape for which they are yearning. This will emphasize experiences and activities unique to the city and the region, consistently providing potential visitors new reasons to travel to Billings. The marketing efforts will responsibly establish a sense of urgency in booking for special seasonal features such as the Grand Opening of the Alberta Bair and other events. Primarily promoted through digital targeting, these travel drivers will be communicated through the brand lens of “Forge Your Own Path.” A content calendar will outline key travel-driving events, activities and attractions by season, and map out markets and allocated budgets throughout the year.

The regional focus will remain on potential travelers with higher awareness and familiarity of Billings in markets that would encourage at least one overnight stay primarily outside a 125-mile radius of the destination including neighboring states like Wyoming, North Dakota and South Dakota. For leisure travel, these close-in drive markets have a higher propensity to visit year-round for events, outdoor activities, and nearby skiing in the winter, as well as short getaways for shopping and dining in Montana’s largest city. In some cases, travel may align with extending a necessity visit (for example, a doctor’s appointment) overnight to include leisure activities. Billings’ regional target audience includes adults ages 25-65 with an annual household income of \$75,000+. Regional markets include Bozeman, MT; Minot-Bismarck-Dickinson, ND; Great Falls, MT; Rapid City, SD; Helena, MT; Missoula, MT; Casper, WY; Cody, WY; Gillette, WY; Billings DMA (excluding the city of Billings).

MEDIA

The regional year-round media plan is primarily digital allowing the plan to stay flexible with recurrent changes in creative and messaging. Online display through a Demand Side Platform (DSP) partner allows us to purchase digital ad inventory while providing efficient reach and targeting with the ability to easily adjust creative throughout seasonal flights. Social and native placement provides opportunity to promote event-driven content and messaging on Visit Billings’ owned channels. Search is critical for driving site traffic from the regional audience already researching Billings’ key events and things to do. Billboard and out-of home placement is incorporated to maintain front-of-mind brand awareness in surrounding regional markets.

b. What are your emerging markets?

MARKETS TO FOSTER/NEW PROJECTS OR PROGRAMS:

As Visit Billings works through the COVID-19 pandemic recovery with the business community and tourism partners, ***fostering existing markets is key.***

The two-wheel market has always performed well for Billings as a destination. The team's strategies will continue to elevate the Billings' brand in this capacity to ensure work done to build this market for Billings in the last decade is maintained.

The Beartooth Scenic Byway continues to draw in the two-wheeled market. The 68-mile stretch of U.S. Highway 212 has been described as “the perfect definition of what a great bike ride should be” by National Geographic and is consistently in the Top 10 best motorcycle rides in the U.S. The Great American Road Trip campaign builds awareness of the destination’s proximity to the most scenic route into Yellowstone

National Park, aligning with the 2-wheeled market which is drawn to curvy roads, riding long distances and experiencing the epic journey. National parks are key drivers of visitation in this segment.

BMW MOA's 2020 Rally was rescheduled to 2021 in Great Falls due to COVID-19 concerns with organizers stating that features will essentially remain unchanged, encouraging this important audience segment to once again visit Billings. FY21 plans include additional sponsored content development and niche digital targeting of the two-wheel audience.

Billings' hospitality amenities and access to surrounding Big Sky Country roads elevate its position with groups like BMW Motorcycle Owners of America, Gold Wing Road Riders Association, Harley Owners Group, and Yamaha Star Motorcycles. Visit Billings saw success in drawing the two-wheel audience with publications like RoadRUNNER Magazine and having a presence at Sturgis Bike Rally.

Likewise, the group tour market from a domestic point of view is key to the strength of the local travel and tourism industry. Yellowstone National Park and Little Bighorn Battlefield, along with the Lewis and Clark Trail, are key attractions positioning Billings as a trailhead to access Montana's iconic sites. These points of interest make Billings a group-friendly destination for the domestic or international traveler. Billings' proximity to the Beartooth Scenic Byway, as well as the northeast and north entrances to Yellowstone National Park, position the city well as a fantastic stop for a group tour itinerary. With international restrictions still in place, the international group tour market still will differ from a typical year. However domestic group travel is certainly still a viable market of business for Billings. With many of the partners and stakeholders already reporting booked business for this summer, Visit Billings staff expect to have a strong return of group tour business to the destination.

While the destination and partners are fortunate to have a level of group business returning in 2021, it is important to note that as the world reopens, Visit Billings and the destination will be in ever-greater competition with larger destinations in both budget and attractions. Visit Billings will remain strong in efforts to build relationships with operators by attending events such as ACGI, IPW, and International Roundup, which all help the team maintain relationships with both international and domestic tour operators. Partnerships are critical to the continued success and growth of the group tour market. Regional partnerships with Visit Southeast Montana and the Red Lodge business community help Visit Billings to facilitate strong routing. Local partnerships with Billings Depot, ZooMontana, and others ensure our guests receive the best possible experiences while spending time at Montana's Trailhead. Alongside these partnerships, continued work with MOTBD, Rocky Mountain International, and Brand USA position Billings well to earn new business and ensure the destination's current business remains up to date on all that Billings has to offer.

Birding, outdoor recreation, road races, and mountain biking in the heart of the Rimrocks on Bureau of Land Management Land are also key categories that will be monitored, pursued, and fostered as markets by Visit Billings staff and the agency of record.

NEW PROJECTS OR PROGRAMS:

Additionally, Visit Billings will focus on earned media, media relations and outreach, as well as making sure the organization is set with a proper press room.

EARNED MEDIA:

Visit Billings' public relations strategy focuses on driving tourism through generating earned media coverage and influencer engagement for the destination in target markets, with editorial stories and influencer commentary that focuses on the many experiences Billings' visitors can enjoy in a way that brings the "Forge Your Own Path" brand to life.

In spring 2020 as COVID-19 closed many destinations and their attractions, travel media likewise halted a majority of coverage they dedicated to destinations and instead pivoted more toward travel safety content. Now, with vaccines restoring confidence, travel media are likely to again turn their editorial focus to the top leisure travel destinations in the country, with digital leading the way and topics such as regional travel and outdoor experiences being of particular interest. Local writers and content creators help tell these local stories of Billings and the region. Visit Billings partners with the MOTBD, tourism and hospitality partners, and neighboring regions in promoting visitation to Billings through earned media initiatives. A few key FY22 tactics include:

MEDIA RELATIONS AND OUTREACH

Throughout the year, Visit Billings will continue to build relationships with influencers and journalists that will help grow the brand and inspire travel. While the typical events Visit Billings attends, such as Public Relations Society of America Travel and Tourism Conference and North America Travel Blog Exchange haven't returned, past attendance has allowed the team to build relationships for the influencer program. With the positive news on vaccinations and reopening, Visit Billings has begun reaching out to potential influencers to visit the area in Summer and Fall of 2021. In addition to inviting journalists and influencers to visit the region to experience Montana's Trailhead for themselves (and of course by extension share that experience with their readers), Visit Billings will be regularly and consistently reaching out to regional and national media with news angles and stories as we introduce new tourism product in the region, whether it be a new hiking trail, a new restaurant, or a special seasonal beer from one of our breweries. This frequent contact will help further develop critical relationships with travel media and influencers, and generate an increase in editorial coverage for the destination.

PRESS ROOM

The VisitBillings.com press page will be updated this year to include sample itineraries for niche audiences (outdoor adventure, culinary, couples, families, etc.), story ideas, trail guide videos and more video and image assets. This is part of the necessary step of developing media/influencer relations content to promote Billings. The pressroom will serve as the content hub for all ongoing media/influencer outreach as we begin to further reintroduce Billings to national and targeted regional media/influencers as the country recovers from COVID-19. Content is an important part of marketing and earned media efforts and, as such, the previously mentioned blog content is produced not only for consumers, but to inspire influencers, journalists and bloggers and therefore nicely complements public relations initiatives.

Optional: Include attachments here.

c. What research supports your target marketing?

THE RESEARCH

Visit Billings relies on several data banks for information to help steer strategies. Some include Billings Destination Analysts research, VisaVue, Smith Travel Research, AirDNA, Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR), and campaign(s) performance.

The year 2020 proved to be an extremely challenging time for destination marketing organizations (DMOs) like Visit Billings. According to The New York Times, it is estimated that in the United States, 4.5 million jobs were lost in the travel and tourism industry as of the end of year 2020 - making it the hardest hit of any industry in the U.S. due to COVID-19 directives and impacts. Approximately 75% of independent restaurants that temporarily closed during the crisis will not recover which impacts visitor experiences. Closer to home, according to a fall 2020 survey conducted by the University of Montana Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research, 53% of the Montana's outfitter and guide businesses that responded to the query temporarily closed their doors. Another 6% shuttered their operations permanently. Bookings were down by 74% and inquiries from travelers had dropped by 62%. State Lodging Tax Collections were down more than 30% which directly impacted FY22 budgets for Visit Billings. Moving into 2021, Visit Billings staff and boards are still navigating the pandemic based on an ever-evolving landscape. The key to navigating a recovery - as travel habits and mindsets changed and adjusted - lies in capturing the data needed to properly prepare for the growing increase in consumer demand for travel. This will allow Visit Billings to plan accordingly, devising strategies and marketing campaigns designed to drive visitation, while giving visitors a sense of security and safety with experiences that align closely with their interests.

According to Destination Analysts, 33.7% of Americans say they have begun planning trips in anticipation of the vaccines being available, with June, July and August being the most likely months to travel. The interest to take leisure trips to small towns, rural and mountain destinations

were at 43% and national parks and road trips at 54%. The Visit Billings' audience is primarily a mix of couples and families ages 25-44 with pre-teen/teen children. According to research, only 35% of the audience is very likely to schedule a vacation in 2021, and COVID-19 is still top of mind. 57% of the audience is considering the state of COVID-19 in their vacation considerations in 2021, with the vaccine and hygiene of travel also appearing in the top factors. The pandemic hasn't stopped them from thinking about travel though – almost half (47%) of the audience have some ideas and are doing research toward a 2021 vacation (as of Jan 2021). Flexibility is top of mind for potential travel consumers, with over half citing the ability to cancel trips easily and flexible booking policies as top incentives to book from travel providers, and 38% are seeking a value for their money. Further, 16% are also more likely to want contactless options available in their travel plans.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

FOSTER VISITOR GROWTH

Tourism is vital to the success of the local business community and the community as a whole. Tourism supports more than 15,000 jobs locally and enhances the overall quality of life by helping support business. As a leading industry in Yellowstone County and Billings, the travel and tourism industry generates more than \$500 million in new revenue locally every year. Fostering visitation is crucial to the health of the lodging and hospitality industries even more so as the economy recovers from COVID-19 impacts. As Visit Billings works to reeducate potential visitors and the economy begins a recovery, the investment in tourism marketing by Visit Billings remains key. Appropriate marketing and sales efforts and strategies work to elevate Billings as a travel destination supporting stakeholders and tourism partners including retailers, restaurants, and local attractions. The role tourism plays in Billings is significant. The economic impact is priority, but so is the opportunity to host visitors from all parts of the world. People come to Montana and Billings to experience the culture, traditions, and gastronomy. At the same time, residents are able to welcome guests and make them feel included no matter their hometown, home country, or background. Tourism creates a cultural exchange between local citizens and tourists. Such enrichment is important to the future of the destination and visitor growth as well as the quality of life and health of the Billings community as a whole. Visit Billings is proud to join the Billings Chamber of Commerce and other city leadership to identify and dismantle conscious and non-conscious systemic bias and discriminatory actions within the community through education, training, advocacy, mentorship, and conversations. This is the Chamber's and Visit Billings' Diversity and Inclusion mission and is woven into greater strategies as well as every conversation and decision contemplated and made by Visit Billings.

THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Creating the best visitor experience imaginable is a top priority for the destination, and the Billings Trail Guides program leads the way in the local tourism industry. This program continues to foster a sense of pride and place for residents by educating them about all Billings has to offer as a community and tourism destination. In Billings, research has previously reflected a weakness in civic pride among Billings' area citizens. Staff members continue to work to grow this program and not lose momentum by graduating Trail Guides who are ready to help visitors feel welcome despite COVID-19 impacts to the tourism industry and community. Even as we deal with the pandemic and its impacts today, Billings' residents have the capacity to elevate Billings which can significantly impact visitor growth and the visitor experience. The purpose of the Billings Trail Guide Program is to give residents the opportunity to become brand ambassadors for Montana's Trailhead. All Trail Guides should have extensive knowledge of the best of Billings, and are able to share the local flair with visitors they encounter. As guests come to Billings, and seek to connect with the city and locals, Visit Billings staff wants to make sure the community is prepared to help. That's why exclusive resources for Trail Guides have been created to provide insightful recommendations for residents, which are available at VisitBillings.com. Visit Billings understands that the visitor experience plays one of the most important roles in growing visitation as a destination. Exceptional service leads to repeat visitation and extended stays. Making sure travelers feel welcome and enjoy their stay at Montana's Trailhead is a major priority for Visit Billings. This is very important in the post-pandemic environment. The Visit Billings staff works in a myriad of ways to help create a positive experience for visitors.

INCREASE LEISURE VISITATION

Visit Billings' marketing and sales efforts aim to position Billings and the surrounding area as a preferred destination for leisure visitation. Leisure travel marketing strategies will remain the highest priority for the organization as leisure visitation supports all Visit Billings'

stakeholders (hotels, motels, campgrounds) as well as tourism partners including restaurants, retailers, and attractions. Regional marketing campaigns will focus on road trip itineraries and partnerships with attractions like ZooMontana, Alberta Bair Theater, MetraPark, and cultural entities to name a few. Covid-19 required the Visit Billings team to be flexible in Leisure Marketing. In spring 2020, it was expected that the world would be fully reopened and, as a destination, we would be competing for visitors with larger destinations such as Denver. However in summer 2020, research showed that people were looking to travel to less populated places and enjoy more outdoor experiences. As vaccinations continue to roll out into summer 2021, Billings is well positioned to capture the audience seeking outdoor adventures. A report conducted in March by ADARA showed Billings, MT in the Top 10 destinations for outdoor and remote travel between July 1 and August 31, 2021. Billings is well positioned to meet that need with amenities like fine dining and the brewery district along with 2021-2022 MARKETING PLAN & BUDGET Strategic Goals gateway access to national historic, cultural and natural attractions - all without the crowds found in a typical major destination.

MEETINGS, REUNIONS, GROUP TOURS, AND SERVICING

Even with the COVID-19 pandemic impacts to the meetings industry, Billings is a desirable meeting destination. By marketing, promoting, and selling Billings as a meeting destination, Visit Billings can generate room nights and revenue for stakeholders which can eventually help in a recovery for the community's economy overall. Visit Billings staff strives to be innovative in how to meet the needs of meeting planners during this time and incentivize decision-makers to choose Billings. Staff inspire and orient meeting professionals with thoughtful sales strategies. This segment can continue to have a strong economic impact on the community. The Visit Billings staff also assists planners who are in-market to execute meetings in the destination by helping facilitate their needs with attendance-building, travel reassurances, registration needs, welcome activities, and in some cases financial assistance. Reunions and domestic group tours are also important segments that can grow visitation to Billings in a pandemic recovery. Similar to leisure visitation, opportunities for growth for both the reunion and group tour segments are priorities for Visit Billings staff. Working with tour operators and reunion planners to boast Billings as key partner for their booking needs is a key priority.

SPORTS TOURISM

Next to leisure visitation, sports tourism is playing a large role in the economic recovery of Billings as a travel destination following COVID-19 transitions and impacts. Therefore, positioning Billings as a sports events destination will remain a priority for Visit Billings in FY22. Staff will continue to foster growth in this segment by supporting partners like the MHSAA, MSU Billings, Rocky Mountain College, area school districts, local tournament directors, as well as the City of Billings and Yellowstone County.

THE INTERNATIONAL MARKETPLACE

Together with tourism partners, Visit Billings has made strong gains in growing international travel to southeast Montana in recent years. The impacts of this travel segment due to COVID-19 and accompanying international travel restrictions are substantial. As the world continues to reopen, it is important for Visit Billings to remain competitive in this segment as (similar to group travel) there is strong competition. In FY22, Visit Billings plans to attend IPW, ACGI, and International Roundup. It is important for Visit Billings to maintain relationships with international tour operators so overseas visitors who have ranked sightseeing, fine dining, and national parks/ monuments as major draws in deciding where to spend time while visiting the United States keep Billings top-of-mind as new travel habits emerge. Visit Billings will work with the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development and partners like Visit Southeast Montana and Rocky Mountain International to remain relevant in travel recovery to the international market.

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

COOPERATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

Due to COVID-19, MOTBD placed their Joint Venture programs on hold which typically included co-op advertising opportunities such as TripAdvisor and Sojern. Once available again, there is value in not only leveraging dollars toward increasing audience reach and frequency, but

in the association and tie to MOTBD messaging and brand pillars.

Digital opportunities that hyper-target a qualified audience of travelers have performed strongly for Billings for decades. Accordingly, staff will look for those opportunities when they arise again.

Visit Billings will continue to partner with MOTBD, Montana's tourism regions, and DMOs on relevant consumer trade shows when appropriate. Billings has and will continue to partner with MOTBD and Visit Southeast Montana at the Rocky Mountain International Roundup and the USTA's IPW.

Visit Billings also appreciates chances to partner in research with VisaVue, AirDNA, and ITRR projects and report/data offerings.

Optional: Include attachment here. Billings Visitor Profile Study - Final Report of Findings 1.18.19.pdf

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

LOCAL AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Visit Billings staff are proud to work with neighboring destinations and tourism regions and will continue to partner in strategic fashion in FY22 including:

- Partnership with Visit Southeast Montana will continue to be a priority for Visit Billings. As budgets allow, Visit Billings staff will work together in execution of familiarization tours, media buys, and site inspections. Visit Billings also participates on the Visit Southeast Montana Board as an ex-officio member which helps maintain an already strong relationship and communications.
- The Yellowstone Country travel region, particularly the Red Lodge area, continues to be an important region where Visit Billings will maintain and build relationships. Many wins have been realized through team efforts between Billings and Red Lodge including the Travel Blog Exchange (TBEX), Hot Bike Tour, Outdoor Writers Association of America, BMW MOA Rally, and GWRRA Wing Ding 38. Billings is a gateway to the Beartooth Highway (considered part of Yellowstone Country) and Yellowstone National Park via Red Lodge. Billings is also a welcome destination for travelers coming out of the park who are seeking services, as well as shopping and urban amenities. There is value in strengthening these regional partnerships.
- Finally, falling in line with MOTBD's strategic goals, Billings will partner with the City of Billings, Chamber of Commerce, Yellowstone County, Downtown Billings Alliance and local leaders to preserve the assets and quality of life in the community, maintaining productive dialogue around seeking ways to improve Billings area tourism products to grow Billings as a year-round destination.

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

Cooperative opportunities that don't focus on winter activities or skiing, typically perform well for Billings.

Visit Billings staff are grateful for any cooperative offering as they elevate all Montana brands big and small growing visitation to one of the greatest states in America.

Regions and CVBs can't do it all on their own. Being part of the Montana brand and being able to partake in major buys with MOTBD make for big wins.

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.	Describe the quantifiable measurements for success including Regulations requirements.	Estimated budget for method.	Marketing Method Evaluation	Add'l Attchmnt
Consumer	Multi-Media Marketing	<p><u>WARM SEASON STRATEGIES:</u></p> <p>As Visit Billings enters FY21, there are two specific hurdles. First, Visit Billings must find the visitors who are once again traveling despite the uncertainty of the pandemic. The second hurdle is the competitiveness of the market. With good news regarding the vaccines, DMOs around the country are preparing to spend large budgets to persuade visitors to choose their destination. Already, keyword search budgets are increasing and destinations are introducing large-scale campaigns to the market. It is imperative to ensure Billings is a top choice amongst travelers as they begin determining where they will go for summer vacation. It also will be important to take into consideration any new offerings among key competitors.</p> <p>With the start of 2021, there is a sense that the worst is now behind us. Vaccines are being distributed, travelers' sentiment is more positive and people are eager to leave their homes and start exploring again. However, it</p>	<p>A LOOK AT THE RESEARCH</p> <p>According to Destination Analysts, 33.7% of Americans say they have begun planning trips in anticipation of the vaccines being available, with June, July and August being the most likely months to travel. The interest to take leisure trips to small towns, rural and mountain destinations were at 43% and national parks and road trips at 54%.</p> <p>The Visit Billings' audience is primarily a mix of couples and families ages 25-44 with pre-teen/teen children. According to research, only 35% of the audience is very likely to schedule a vacation in 2021, and COVID-19 is still top of mind. 57% of the audience is considering the state of COVID-19 in</p>	<p>KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs):</p> <p>To balance quantity and quality of website visitation, the marketing campaign will optimize digital media toward conversion actions and monitor for an efficient CPC (cost per click) and CTR (click-through rate).</p> <p>The following engagement actions will be tracked and can be available upon request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landing page visits Requests for Visitor Guides 3+ minutes on site eNewsletter sign-ups <p>Google Analytics will be made available as well</p> <p>Please note:</p> <p>The campaign will be set up dynamically allowing</p>	\$75,000.00		

still will take time for things to return to normal, although the definition of normal will never be the same. Yet even the industry is beginning to feel positive once more. Dax Schieffer, director of Voices of Montana Tourism, shared his thoughts with the Billings Gazette: "The state's tourism industry may be well positioned to rebound in 2021. With cruise ships and indoor venues still seeming unsafe, the outdoors are a healthy option. Fewer people flying has increased the airline industry's interest in serving more remote places like Montana."

GOALS

1. Increase awareness for Billings as an ideal spring/summer travel destination, leveraging the destination's brand, "Forge Your Own Path."
2. Increase awareness for the big skies, unspoiled outdoor adventure, a unique urban downtown and hospitality offerings all found in a visit to Billings - while reminding visitors that Billings, Montana is the most scenic route into Yellowstone with incredible proximity to iconic attractions.
3. Encourage visitors to experience the culinary and cultural offerings in the city of Billings paired with the natural attractions surrounding the city.
4. Drive unique and repeat traffic to the website with a strategy that leverages digital and video-driven channels.
5. Integrate the Great American Road Trip into the campaign that also speaks to visitors in the flight markets, targeting both drive and flight markets.
6. Stay flexible to evolve the campaign as necessary based on travelers' ongoing response to the pandemic situation.

Billings' welcoming vibe and deep roots in Western culture and Native American heritage set it apart from its competitive set. It is

their vacation considerations in 2021, with the vaccine and hygiene of travel also appearing in the top factors. The pandemic hasn't stopped them from thinking about travel though – almost half (47%) of the audience have some ideas and are doing research toward a 2021 vacation (as of Jan 2021).

Flexibility is top of mind for potential travel consumers, with over half citing the ability to cancel trips easily and flexible booking policies as top incentives to book from travel providers, and 38% are seeking a value for their money. Further, 16% are also more likely to want contactless options available in their travel plans.

retargeting of the budget toward the market that is performing the best.

This will be closely monitored, so the budget remains spread over the entire campaign.

Visit Billings staff in partnership with agency colleagues will also monitor the following data:

•Smith Travel Research demand; occupancy

a place for new experiences, where one can find new ways to experience the familiar. The destination gives access to uniquely powerful encounters with the natural world, alongside the comforts of modern life. This is what visitors are seeking in 2021.

The marketing campaign should introduce them - or remind them - of the adventures that can be found along the Rimrocks and the Yellowstone River.

The campaign will give them a sense of the unique vibe found only in downtown Billings, with the only walkable brew trail and a nationally-renowned new sloth exhibit at ZooMontana - combined with the comfort that travelers are seeking in hotel offerings. It will be critical to re-engage with visitors and remind them why Billings should be their first choice when choosing a vacation destination, with its proximity to an array of outdoor wonders, historic monuments and local arts, cuisine and culture providing a unique experience unlike any other in the competitive set.

Visit Billings also aims to align with MOTBD's messaging to increase Billings' exposure with out-of-state visitors. MOTBD's primary messaging positions Montana as a place for free-spirited adventure, a place for new experiences where one can find new ways to experience the familiar, and a place where one has access to uniquely powerful encounters with the natural world, as well as the comforts of modern life. Their marketing highlights the unique scenic beauty (sweeping mountain ranges, big sky ambiance and diverse geography). Billings offers great things for western travelers and those looking for Montana adventures.

TARGET AUDIENCE

After a year of uncertainty, turmoil and impacts on the organization's budget, Visit Billings will execute a national campaign this year as flight markets are recovering.

Flexibility will be important for the media campaign, to ensure dollars are spent where they are generating the most response. Behavioral targeting will focus on the domestic traveler - those looking for a long weekend escape from their metro area, those interested in nature-related trips, and those looking for a rural escape into their surrounding outdoor paradises. The target audience is families with a household income of \$75,000+.

The geographic markets will include the following:

PRIMARY: Key feeder markets include Minneapolis, Denver, Salt Lake City, Chicago and Dallas with interest in travel to Montana and the western region of the U.S., including monuments, state and national parks and western heritage.

SECONDARY: Regional close-in drive markets, primarily in-state and Wyoming. Bozeman, MT; Great Falls, MT; Helena, MT; Missoula, MT; Minot-Bismark-Dickinson, ND; Rapid City, SD; Casper, WY; Buffalo WY; Sheridan WY; Billings DMA (excluding city of Billings) + city of Gillette, city of Cody.

MEDIA

The planning for the next campaign will include re-entering the flight markets, researching potential new audiences and any additional platforms Visit Billings can leverage to fully maximize the campaign's success.

The Fall/Winter campaign has generated solid increases to the website and has laid down the foundation onto which Visit Billings staff can build the next campaign. Knowing what is working - and optimizing against platforms that aren't performing as well - will allow us to continue strengthening brand awareness for Visit Billings and encourage visitors to consider this beautiful location as a destination not to miss. As outdoors, rural towns, national parks and uncrowded cities are still a high priority with

		<p>travelers, Billings is the perfect place to entice, welcome and host eager visitors who are ready to book. Paid media on digital and social platforms including Facebook and Instagram will remain prominent in the integrated campaign.</p> <p>Creative materials will place emphasis on video placement through Instagram stories, Facebook's Instant Experience and a video network, so that impressions are not locked to the content on just one platform but can be optimized to whichever channel is showing the best performance. Paid search also will continue to play a prominent role in driving qualified traffic to VisitBillings.com.</p>					
Consumer	Social Media	<p>A strong content strategy continues to play a vital role in Visit Billings' marketing strategy. Social media has proven to be effective in the inspirational phase of travel decision-making. Paired with the Visit Billings blog and email channels, the team is able to tell a complete story to potential visitors. As we grow closer to a vaccinated public and destinations begin to open up, we have stayed active in content creation initiatives to attract those who are ready to travel now and continue to inspire those who are still cautious.</p> <p>The Visit Billings social channels not only inspire future travel, they also assist the team in facilitating those who are already at Montana's Trailhead by giving them relevant information regarding travel in the area. Visit Billings' social media strategy is focused on sharing the destination's story in a compelling, consistent and editorial manner, thus strengthening awareness for Billings' culture and heightening its position within the online space and among its competitive set. This will continue to be critical as travelers once again start planning getaways and vaccines continue to be accessible.</p>	<p>According to a study by the World Travel & Tourism Council, 58% of American travelers will be focusing on domestic trips. As travel reemerges, Visit Billings owned social channels will keep us connected to the visitors and engage them with inspiring travel and destination content as well as upcoming events and the continued reopening of our area. With storytelling as its driving characteristic, the content strategy focuses on extending the Visit Billings' voice into the online space as a persona – the approachable and lighthearted Billings Trail Guide. "Forge Your Own Path" represents the Billings mentality and is rooted in the local way of life. Visit Billings combines a friendly familiarity with a down-to-earth tone, finding a path for any personality. This includes a new one for Wellness, offering more than spas and saunas but an entire holistic approach to expand vacation options for any</p>	<p>Visit Billings will supply the following information in completion reporting of this application:</p> <p>Via social media conversion for each campaign paid for using these funds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e-communication sign-ups • visitor guidebook requests • landing page visits <p>Visit Billings can also include served impressions from any campaign performance report for IG, FB, Tiktok.</p>	\$2,500.00		

Facebook serves as a Billings Trail Guide, posting consistent updates and addressing followers' inquiries in a timely manner. The type of content will include information on events, photography/video, details on attractions, closings/ openings, what's new, user-generated content, and third-party endorsement through press coverage, etc.

The Facebook channel will:

- Encourage dialogue by asking followers' questions.
- Be a channel for highlighting partners when special events are happening through ticket giveaways when possible.
- Include links within posts, when relevant, to help drive traffic to the Billings blog and website.
- Tag relevant hospitality partners, attractions, events and visitors in posts, when applicable, to maximize visibility and reach.
- Create greater social reach with the Trailhead Tuesday videos.
- Incorporate paid campaigns aimed at attracting new followers from key markets.

Instagram is the inspiration channel for Visit Billings with more than 5,000 followers, guiding travelers on their dreaming and ultimately planning phases. The Instagram channel features compelling imagery and videos, both branded and consumer-generated.

The Instagram channel will:

- Curate and utilize consumer-generated photography and video.
- Create editorial photos and videos aimed to highlight destination experiences and offerings in a visually-compelling way.
- Leverage the existing #VisitBillings and #MontanasTrailhead hashtag

potential visitor. Visit Billings' voice reflects the optimism and inspiration that comes from being surrounded by the land of big skies and big dreams. New to Visit Billings' social channels this year are the Trailhead Tuesday videos where staff have spent time with local businesses and attractions to help highlight activities in the area.

Visit Billings' owned channels rely on an integrated editorial content calendar. The content calendar provides the opportunity to plan and prepare content (e.g. copy, photos, videos, etc.) ahead of time, week-by-week – streamlining social content development efforts across all channels and seeing how they all interrelate (i.e. from e-newsletters to media outreach). It will further facilitate the integration of seasonal messaging, key events, new local businesses, etc. The calendar assists the team in planning future videos to create content that engages a variety of personalities on social channels. Visit Billings also will increase exposure through the tagging of relevant accounts and hashtags to piggyback on timely industry conversations.

while encouraging visitors and stakeholders to do the same.

- Create engaging and authentic “Stories” to show followers real-time activities and inspire them to follow upcoming events.
- Create greater social reach with the Trailhead Tuesday videos.
- Engage with traditional media through the use of designated hashtags to aggregate related content and join in on relevant and timely social media conversations.

Visit Billings also used Instagram to help expand the Sloth Campaign with ZooMontana by creating an Instagram page for Winston the Sloth. Visit Billings and ZooMontana staff co-manage this channel to continue engagement and interest in coming to Billings to see Winston. This summer, the team will use this channel to highlight other great attractions by introducing Winston as an “unofficial” mascot of Billings.

TikTok is now boasting more than 800 million monthly active users, worldwide. This newer social channel is now the 6th largest social network and is expected to keep growing. TikTok celebrates storytellers, making this an opportunity for Visit Billings to expand our content strategy. This channel will be first tested in the Summer 2021 marketing campaign by sharing unique facts about the destination in hopes of inspiring additional research into visiting the area.

EMAIL

Email marketing is an effective way to reach those travelers who have specifically expressed interest with Visit Billings, connecting with them in a valuable and cost-effective way. The Visit Billings team educates, engages and inspires them to travel to this destination by exposing travelers to editorial content, blog articles and social content. Visit Billings has a 15% open rate with a database of just over 30,000 contacts.

		<p>VISIT BILLINGS BLOG</p> <p>Visit Billings will continue to utilize social and email channels to promote new blog content, featuring experiences that align with the interest-based personas established for the website, from History Buffs to Foodies and Outdoor Enthusiasts. Visit Billings team members along with tourism colleagues and stakeholders will have the opportunity to be blog post authors and feature their own unique Billings Trail Guide experiences</p> <p>GIPHY'S</p> <p>Also new to the Visit Billings' content strategy is the creation of animated GIFs through GIPHY, which is the best way to search, share, discover and create animated GIFs on the Internet. These Billings and Montana inspired stickers can be used on any GIF keyboard to help enhance user-generated content for locals and visitors alike. Ten GIPHY animations were created in spring 2021, and as Visit Billings expands its campaigns, the team will have the opportunity to add to these.</p>					
Consumer	Joint Ventures	<p>There is value in not only leveraging dollars toward increasing audience reach and frequency, but in the association and tie to MOTBD messaging and brand pillars. Digital opportunities that hyper target a qualified audience of travelers have been heavy-lifters for Billings. Accordingly, staff will look first to those opportunities again. In FY19, Visit Billings participated in several of the MOTBD co-op advertising opportunities including Parents Magazine, Sojern and TripAdvisor. Similar placements will be considered in FY21, as the pandemic recovery takes place.</p> <p>MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS - JOINT VENTURES</p>	<p>Joint venture and cooperative opportunities have proven successful with MOTBD and state partners in previous budget years including major placements in top rated publications as well as city takeovers like those experienced in Dallas and Chicago in recent years.</p> <p><i>Per MOTBD's website:</i></p> <p><i>Due to COVID-19 this program is on hold, we will be contacting partners directly when we are ready to transition to a new program.</i></p> <p><i>Through the Joint Venture Marketing Program, the Montana Office of Tourism and</i></p>	<p>it's difficult at this time to note how success will be measured since there is no programming being offered.</p> <p>MOTBD JOINT VENTURES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Digital opportunities that hyper-target a qualified audience of travelers have performed strongly for Billings prior to COVID-19. •Accordingly, staff will look for those opportunities when they arise again. •Visit Billings will continue partnering with the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD) in marketing and advertising opportunities including 	\$53,400.00		

Due to COVID-19, MOTBD placed their Joint Venture programs on hold which typically include co-op advertising opportunities such as TripAdvisor and Sojern. Once available again, there is value in not only leveraging dollars toward increasing audience reach and frequency, but in the association and tie to MOTBD messaging and brand pillars.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS/COOPERATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

Visit Billings staff are proud to work with neighboring destinations and tourism regions and will continue to partner in strategic fashion in FY22 including:

- Partnership with Visit Southeast Montana will continue to be a priority for Visit Billings.
- The Yellowstone Country travel region, particularly the Red Lodge area, continues to be an important region where Visit Billings will maintain and build relationships. Many wins have been realized through team efforts between Billings and Red Lodge including the Travel Blog Exchange (TBEX), Hot Bike Tour, Outdoor Writers Association of America, BMW MOA Rally, and GWRRA Wing Ding 38. Billings is a gateway to the Beartooth Highway (considered part of Yellowstone Country) and Yellowstone National Park via Red Lodge. Billings is also a welcome destination for travelers coming out of the park who are seeking services, as well as shopping and urban amenities. There is value in strengthening these regional partnerships.
- Falling in line with MOTBD's strategic goals, Billings will partner with the City of Billings, Chamber of Commerce, Yellowstone County, Downtown Billings Alliance and local leaders to preserve the assets and quality of life in the community, maintaining productive dialogue around seeking ways to improve Billings area tourism products to grow

Business Development (MOTBD) aims to provide Joint Venture Partners (JV Partners: regions, CVBs, TBIDs and tourism industry partners) with a variety of affordable joint venture advertising opportunities that leverage the state brand and resources.

The goal is to offer opportunities that shoulder up to MOTBD's overall plan to make the entire state's advertising stronger and more cohesive.

Visit Billings will base decisions on such placements as the fiscal year transitions and evolves.

print, digital, OOH, and trade shows.

PARTNERSHIPS & COOPERATIVE OPPORTUNITIES:

•The organization will also partner with Regions and other CVBs in order to help market Billings and elevate the state as a whole when applicable. As budgets allow, Visit Billings staff will work together in execution of familiarization tours, media buys, and site inspections.

•Visit Billings will continue to partner with Montana's tourism regions and DMOs on relevant consumer trade shows when appropriate. Billings has and will continue to partner with MOTBD and Visit Southeast Montana at the Rocky Mountain International Roundup and the USTA's IPW.

		<p>Billings as a year-round destination.</p> <p>We appreciate opportunities that invest in elevating Billings to a diverse and wide range of print or digital offerings.</p>					
Consumer	Opportunity Marketing	<p>Visit Billings will look to these funds should an appropriate opportunity to grow visitation at Montana's Trailhead, present itself. If not, dollars will be shifted to consumer (leisure) marketing efforts.</p>	<p>Once the project is known, such information can be described.</p>	<p>During planning of FY22, not all opportunities for marketing are known. Visit Billings is grateful for the opportunity to reserve dollars under consumer/opportunity marketing in order to be prepared for upcoming and unknown options in the 12 months ahead particularly in an economic and tourism industry recovery period.</p>	\$1,000.00		
Consumer	Website/Internet Development/Updates	<p>VISITBILLINGS.COM</p> <p>The Visit Billings website is the destination's primary branding and communications tool, where the destination's "Forge Your Own Path" brand has been brought to life to orient potential visitors. Throughout the pandemic, it was key to communicating the destination's mitigation efforts and "open for business" messaging. In today's digital landscape, destination marketing websites must work even harder to engage the consumer. While travelers filter through user-generated content (UGC), TripAdvisor reviews, Instagram posts and travel blogs, a destination website should be positioned as a trusted resource for travel inspiration and planning. VisitBillings.com is designed to ensure the content is consistently updated and relevant to the individual needs of potential travelers. New persona-driven web content is developed to guide prospective History Buffs, Outdoor Enthusiasts, Foodies, Shopaholics, Arts & Culture Aficionados, and Wellness-Seekers to Billings. Simultaneously, the Great American Road Trip microsite also inspires travelers to hit the road</p>	<p>THE ORIENTATION PHASE is where the traveler begins researching the details of his or her trip. This phase focuses on the route the traveler will take to arrive at the chosen destination and the mode of transportation used to get there. Per the strategic plan, Montana's visitors have multiple destinations to consider within the state and bordering states when building trips and researching travel to this part of the West. Montana's DMOs provide tools to help the visitor plan a route while encouraging a longer stay.</p>	<p>Visit Billings can report which projects and updates were performed in support of this project.</p> <p>Visit Billings staff can report website data including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total visits • Organic visits to site based on SEO • Partner referrals 	\$2,500.00		

		<p>and choose Billings as their vacation destination.</p> <p>Visit Billings staff will work with its AOR to ensure the website, www.VisitBillings.com, remains relevant to current campaigns and continues to build off of the three phases of the travel decision process per MOTBD.</p> <p>The website is an important part of MOTBD's orientation terminology and definition to help orient potential visitors (and those currently in market) about what to do in Billings and how to make the destination part of a trip itinerary.</p>				
Film	Opportunity Marketing	<p>This is a to be determined (TBD) expense.</p> <p>Visit Billings looks forward to any opportunity to help the Montana Film Office success for the Montana brand.</p>	<p>In the past, Visit Billings has hosted directors and producers with film/location scouts in order to help meet the needs of any project. Staff will be on call and offer support to the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development and the Film Office with DOC, to ensure Montana and its communities are film-friendly.</p>	<p>Once a project is declared, this can be established.</p>	\$1,000.00	
Group Marketing	Multi-Media Marketing	<p>Meeting Recruitment Efforts:</p> <p>The recovery of in-person meetings is underway. Meeting recruitment continues to be an important priority to Visit Billings. In FY22, Visit Billings staff will support meetings planners in this time of uncertainty - providing them innovative thinking and fresh perspectives - to help Billings recover as a meeting destination. Visit Billings will use Billings CVB funds to help market and promote the destination to planners with multi-marketing strategies with proven companies like Small Market Meetings, CONNECT, and Meetings Today.</p> <p>Group Tour Marketing Efforts:</p> <p>Yellowstone National Park and Little Bighorn Battlefield, along</p>	<p>Meeting Recruitment and Marketing Efforts: In 2010, the meeting and convention market accounted for 24% of visitation to Billings annually. Competition and a lack of larger meeting space in the city has cut that percentage in the last decade. Couple that weakness with COVID-19 impacts and this important market is a priority to the CVB. According to Destination Analysts, the appeal of attending in-person meetings has improved in the last 12 months. Even a majority of those surveyed who are</p>	<p>Meetings Marketing for Recruitment:</p> <p>The Billings CVB will place at least two (2) digital placements with companies marketing to meeting planners who may be interested in booking in Billings for an upcoming event.</p> <p>Staff will contract with companies like Meetings Today Live or CVENT to focus on a meeting planner audience looking to future in-person bookings. Creative may include artwork that resonates with them in terms of venues that offer places with flexible indoor and outdoor space (bonus</p>	\$40,000.00	

with the Lewis and Clark Trail, are key attractions positioning Billings as a trailhead to access Montana's iconic sites. These points of interest make Billings a group-friendly destination for the domestic or international traveler. Billings' proximity to the Beartooth Scenic Byway, as well as the northeast and north entrances to Yellowstone National Park, position the city well as a fantastic stop for a group tour itinerary. With international restrictions still in place, the international group tour market still will differ from a typical year. However domestic group travel is certainly still a viable market of business for Billings. With many of the partners and stakeholders already reporting booked business for this summer, Visit Billings staff expect to have a strong return of group tour business to the destination.

Sports Tourism:

Along with the leisure market, sports tourism played a major role in helping Billings' area businesses recover from COVID-19 impacts in early 2021. Organized youth sports, amateur, and high school events are essential in helping grow visitation to Montana's Trailhead. In FY22, positioning Billings as a sports events destination remains a priority for Visit Billings with staff looking at new technologies and innovations that will shape the future of sports events and sports tourism. Key to success in sports for Billings is supporting local tournament directors whose commitment to softball, lacrosse, basketball, soccer, baseball tournaments as well as mountain bike and road races prove to be wildly successful for businesses as major draws for the city. Visit Billings achieves this with TBID funds, but relies on CVB funds to help market the destination as a sports tourism community.

skeptical of travel for meetings still look forward to the next in-person meeting or convention opportunity once vaccinated or to a region deemed safer to travel.

Group Tour

Market: While the destination and partners are fortunate to have a level of group business returning in 2021, it is important to note that as the world reopens, Visit Billings and the destination will be in ever-greater competition with larger destinations in both budget and attractions. Visit Billings will remain strong in efforts to build relationships with operators by attending events such as ACGI, IPW, and International Roundup, which all help the team maintain relationships with both international and domestic tour operators. Partnerships are critical to the continued success and growth of the group tour market.

Sports Tourism

Market: According to Intrado, the sports tourism market is poised to grow by \$1,381.02 billion during the period of 2020-2024. It's important for Visit Billings to grow its brand in the appropriate marketing avenues. Sports Planning Guide notes that sports tourism relies on the spending of thousands of parents willing to invest in their children through private lessons, club team fees, airline tickets, hotel rooms, and countless weekends on the road.

points for scenic views!), historic venues, and/or special venues for smaller groups.

Staff will place on websites or in publications that target meeting planners interested in booking in the west region of the United States.

All placements will push those interested to the VisitBillings.com planner's page for more information on booking in Billings.

GOALS

1. Build greater brand awareness of Billings as a meeting destination.
2. Foster relationships with qualified meeting planners looking for support to book small-market meetings, citywide events, and reunions.

Sports Tourism:

The Billings CVB will place at least two (2) digital placements with companies marketing to sports tournament or sports events directors who may be interested in booking in Billings for an upcoming sporting event.

Staff will contract with companies like SportsETA as a go-to resource for sports events planners, to help elevate the local sports events brand in Billings.

GOALS

1. Elevate Billings and Yellowstone County as the strongest sports destination in the region.
2. Be a valuable and innovative resource to tournament directors and associations in efforts to host and grow competitions that draw

athletes and fans from across the region while generating room nights for lodging partners during the recovery.

Group Tour Marketing Efforts:

The Billings CVB will look at placing with companies that target tour operators and market with such organizations, companies, or publications (digital or print) who may be interested in looking to Billings to learn more about booking tours in the area using local lodging facilities in order to access key attractions in the region. Billings is an economical stop along routes in the west. Staff will look to place digital marketing with two (2) or more group tour market publications or digital offerings to grow the Billings' brand in this segment. Particularly as this market recoups from COVID-19 impacts.

GOALS

1. Elevate Billings and Yellowstone County as the trailhead to national and state parks and monuments key to group tour itineraries.
2. Be a valuable and innovative resource to tour operators in efforts to host and grow group tour bookings for lodging partners creating an impact in occupancy during warm season months. Occupancy can be tracked using Smith Travel Research reporting growing citywide data.

Group Marketing	Travel/Trade Shows	<p>With international restrictions still in place, the international group tour market still will differ from a typical year. However domestic group travel is certainly still a viable market of business for Billings. With many of the partners and stakeholders already reporting booked business for this summer, Visit Billings staff expect to have a strong return of group tour business to the destination.</p>	<p>Yellowstone National Park and Little Bighorn Battlefield, along with the Lewis and Clark Trail, are key attractions positioning Billings as a trailhead to access Montana's iconic sites. These points of interest make Billings a group-friendly destination for the domestic or international traveler. Billings' proximity to the Beartooth Scenic Byway, as well as the northeast and north entrances to Yellowstone National Park, position the city well as a fantastic stop for a group tour itinerary.</p> <p>Billings is a proven, strong destination for tour operators to build into their tour itineraries for groups or individual clients. Stakeholders and tourism partners (hotels like the DoubleTree by Hilton and partners like the Historic Billings Depot) have contracts with operators who help bring business and economic impact into Billings in this market.</p>	<p>While the destination and partners are fortunate to have a level of group business returning in 2021, it is important to note that as the world reopens, Visit Billings and the destination will be in ever-greater competition with larger destinations in both budget and attractions. Visit Billings will remain strong in efforts to build relationships with operators by attending events such as ACGI, IPW, and International Roundup, which all help the team maintain relationships and lead the way to future bookings for Billings stakeholders and partners.</p>	\$6,750.00		
Marketing Support	Ad Agency Services	<p>Contracting with a proven creative agency is important to the destination marketing process and overall strategies for Visit Billings.</p> <p>Visit Billings contracts with Sunshine & Bourbon in a retainer model in order to execute the following timely and efficiently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing Strategies • Remain fluid with placements and campaign execution in proper DMAs • Be nimble in all market segments in a COVID-19 recovery <p>Ongoing planning, execution, and assessment of campaigns and projects are part of the key partnership between Visit Billings and its AOR.</p>	<p>MOTBD looks to CVBs and Regions to execute the MOTBD noted Decision Making Process. Visit Billings' AOR helps execute this process:</p> <p>Inspiring, orienting, and facilitating are the priorities for Visit Billings in partnership with MOTBD and Montana's Regions and CVBs. The Visit Billings agency of record (AOR), Sunshine and Bourbon, assists in executing all aspects of the organization's marketing plan, tactics, and strategies while also assisting Visit Billings marketing staff with projects and programs</p>	<p>The overall mission is to increase year-round visitation targeting regional, national and international travelers.</p> <p>During FY22, Visit Billings will continue to build off of successes realized during a strong FY19. FY19 Smith Travel Research Reports reflected consistent gains in occupancy and room demand.</p> <p>In FY17, following BTBID Board driven direction, the Visit Billings staff began the process of assessing and diversifying the organization's leisure marketing after weaknesses in the leisure</p>	\$36,000.00		

		<p>Marketing and strategizing are some of the most important pieces of destination marketing and management. As a destination management and marketing organization, Visit Billings works with Sunshine & Bourbon to grow visitation in all national and regional, domestic and international, varying market segments like meetings, conventions, leisure, sports, group tours, and business travel segments all FY.</p>	<p>that position the city as Montana's Trailhead.</p>	<p>segment were experienced. Together with the organization's agency of record, staff will forge ahead to grow visitation to the destination.</p> <p>Visit Billings will report KPIs per campaign as noted in consumer budgeting, but will also follow up with Smith Travel Research Room Demand, Occupancy, and ADR data.</p> <p>Monthly retainer is a shared expense between the Billings CVB and private dollars. In FY22, funds will assist with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual planning and strategizing • Results and reporting • Artwork, Creative • Social media consulting • Assistance building and managing photo/video libraries • Key to mobile-friendly websites and developments • e-communications templates and systems • Relevant landing pages • Branding power and consistency • Help with creation of strategies for consumers shows • Sales, orientation, and facilitation materials for all market segments • Presentations/ROI programming • Public Relation strategies and assistance in execution of programming 			
Marketing Support	Administration	Per Regulations and Procedures for Regional/CVB Tourism	The Billings CVB is a very important organization to the local	Promotion and support of the local lodging community assisting with	\$70,200.00		

		<p>Organizations regarding use of the Lodging Facility Use Tax:</p> <p>Up to but not to exceed the amount, 20% of the Billings CVB's new annual revenue may be designated to cover administrative expenses, which are defined in the Rules and Regulations Document.</p> <p>Some of these allowable expenses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment such as copying machine, phones, software, etc. • Rent • Storage • Legal Fees • Janitorial Services • Utilities 	<p>lodging community in support of the economy and annual execution of the tax proceeds to market and sell Billings as a preferred travel destination.</p> <p>Visit Billings is managed by the Billings Chamber of Commerce which helps leverage funds for the organization.</p> <p>Clearly \$70,200 doesn't cover expenses incurred by a DMO, but the administrative amount does help offset expenses in order to help Visit Billings execute mission to promote and support the local lodging community and grow visitation at Montana's Trailhead.</p>	<p>the Lodging Facility Use Tax per Montana Code Annotated is a main driver for the Billings CVB.</p> <p>If local lodging partners are supported, the partnership between the Department of Commerce, Billings CVB, and the Billings Chamber of Commerce is successful.</p> <p>Not to exceed 20% of our new annual revenue per Rules & Procedures.</p>			
Marketing Support	Fulfillment/Telemarketing/Call Center	<p>Fulfillment is important to visitor orientation and facilitation. The Billings Visitor Guide assists planning and active travelers with both:</p> <p>THE ORIENTATION PHASE is where the traveler begins researching the details of his or her trip. This phase focuses on the route the traveler will take to arrive at the chosen destination and the mode of transportation used to get there. Per the strategic plan, Montana's visitors have multiple destinations to consider within the state and bordering states. Regions and CVBs provide tools to help the visitor plan a route and encourage a longer stay.</p> <p>THE FACILITATION PHASE is where the traveler seeks experiences en route to a destination and during a stay.</p> <p>In order to better reach potential visitors to Montana and Billings, contracts with Certified Folder Display (CFD) will help distribute the Billings Visitor Guide in key markets including other parts of Montana, Western North and</p>	<p>76% of travelers to Montana are repeat visitors. It's important to ensure a positive experience during trip execution to help result in more repeat visitation.</p> <p>Printed materials, digital offerings, customer service training programs for frontline employees and a visitor information center all assist in this phase of the travel process.</p> <p>Such contracts for fulfillment like those noted in this marketing segment and method, help the destination execute mission to grow visitation and foster repeat visitation.</p>	<p>Visit Billings tracks inventory of the Visitor Guide with Certified Folder to assess interest. In FY19, Certified Folder ran out of the Guidebook in most locations. In FY20 and FY21, despite COVID-19 impacts to travel in other parts of the United States, inventory was depleted. Visit Billings prints 70,000 guides annually and with fulfillment contracts and local distribution, exhausts the inventory annually.</p> <p>Staff will continue to track inventory and how mailers and distribution relate to visitation.</p> <p>In FY22, Certified Folder Display will offer the Billings Visitor Guide along wht I-90, I-94, and I-15 corridors.</p> <p>These areas include:</p> <p>Rapid City</p> <p>The Black Hills</p>	\$20,000.00		

		<p>South Dakota and Northern Wyoming.</p> <p>In addition to contract fulfillment, Visit Billings will utilize dollars for general postage and fulfillment assistance with local mail service, MTS. When staff members are unable to keep up with mailer requests, contracting with businesses like MTS for fulfillment and mailer services becomes very important.</p>		<p>Yellowstone Route</p> <p>Buffalo and Sheridan, WY</p> <p>Helena</p> <p>Great Falls</p> <p>Bozeman Rest Area</p> <p>Sweetgrass Rest Area</p> <p>Anaconda Rest Area</p> <p>Dena Mora Area</p> <p>Butte</p>			
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	<p>TAC Meetings: Most of these meetings take place in Helena and require travel and at least one overnight stay. During COVID-19 restrictions, this changed and meetings were virtual. However, in FY22, it's anticipated in-person meetings will resume. These funds will accommodate those commitments.</p> <p>Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation: This event is hosted by a Montana community that differs from year to year. This event requires travel and typically two overnight stays. However, this meeting will be hosted in market in 2022, but there will be new staff who will be registering for this event.</p>	<p>Team building and information gathering are important aspects of the industry and making sure all partners understand what is required of them and ways/opportunities to work together.</p> <p>For other needs, please reference the MOTBD Regulations and Procedures document pertaining to such meeting expenses.</p>	<p>TAC Meetings are a requirement. Attendance by the executive director at all quarterly TAC meetings and the Governor's Conference will be measurement of success.</p> <p>The Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation is typically a success for staff and is attended annually for many reasons including exposure to partners, relationship building, information gathering, and the tradeshow.</p>	\$1,500.00		
Marketing Support	Printed Material	<p>Printed Materials for Visit Billings focus on the "Forge Your Own Path" branding and encourage travelers to seek adventure around every corner with the assistance from beautiful imagery, maps, recreational listing, and more. These printed materials are an important part of both the orientation and facilitation phases of the MOTBD Travel Decision Process.</p> <p>Visit Billings' focus is to provide accessible and authentic information; therefore, no advertising is included in Visit Billings publications.</p> <p>Materials available via digital format at www.VisitBillings.com as</p>	<p>Printed materials are essential to visitor orientation and facilitation for leisure and group travel.</p>	<p>Inventory will be monitored along with other factors depending on the specific project.</p>	\$3,000.00		

		<p>well.</p> <p>The Billings Scenic Drive Map has long been a popular choice of orientation and facilitation both on www.VisitBillings.com in a digital offering, in the Billings Visitor Guide, and as a stand alone map used in hotels, motels, the airport, and the Billings Visitor Information Center. This popular map will need to be reprinted in FY22 as well.</p> <p>Billings Brew Trail Map:</p> <p>Billings is a craft beer hotspot and the Billings Brew Trail is Montana's only walkable self-guided brewery tour. Although it continues to grow, the current list includes six breweries, two distilleries and a cider house. In May 2019, the city hosted the first-ever Billings Craft Brew Week with Taproom Cards to earn stamps for prizes, yoga, and movie events, as well as a Beer Run and post-race party. Over 350 runners arrived in downtown Billings for the event. After the event was canceled last year, 2021 will see it return with the craft beer week being hosted August 15th-21st and the Last Best Beer Run & 5k scheduled for August 21st. Visit Billings through its grant program has been a supporter of this event</p> <p>In FY19, Visit Billings rebranded the local brewery district from Billings' Walkable Historic Brewery District to the Billings Brew Trail. This tear-off map and digital map are very popular in all market segments. This budget item allows for the annual reprint of this map.</p>					
Marketing Support	Professional Development	It is important to gain industry knowledge to be able to serve stakeholders and the mission of the organization.	The Destinations International Annual Convention has a history of being a very worthy investment for many reasons including networking opportunities and the sharing of best practices among peers in the industry.	A full report to the Visit Billings Boards of Directors (TBID and Chamber/CVB) will be made available. The Visit Billings staff member who attends shares findings and revelations with colleagues and coworkers. However,	\$1,850.00		

				in FY22, private funds will help pay for additional staff to attend this conference in order to ensure greater industry knowledge in a pandemic recovery.		
Publicity	Fam Trips	<p>Familiarization trips, or FAMS, are excellent opportunities for planners and/or tour operators to learn more about a destination, hotel and other amenities in the region that would make local product a good fit for them.</p> <p>Visit Billings will continue to build relationships with influencers and journalists that will help grow the brand and mission. In some cases, meeting planners may be offered fam tours as well to help grow the meetings segment at Montana's Trailhead.</p> <p>FAMILIARIZATION (FAM) TOURS AND PRESS TRIPS</p> <p>Ultimately, some of the best media coverage is a result of journalists and influencers visiting the destination.</p> <p>Prior to COVID-19, Visit Billings had great momentum with publicity due to hosting Travel Blog Exchange in September of 2019.</p> <p>Visit Billings hosted content creators, bloggers, and journalists that hit key areas of focus including summer outdoor recreation, Billings' food scene, and establishing Billings as the most scenic route into Yellowstone National Park via Beartooth Highway.</p> <p>Journalists from RoadRUNNER Magazine embraced Montana's Trailhead in August as they produced a video and article around four amazing twowheel road trips in and around Billings.</p> <p>In the recovery, Visit Billings staff will look for opportunities to reignite this segment safely.</p>	<p>MEDIA RELATIONS AND OUTREACH</p> <p>Throughout the year, Visit Billings will continue to build relationships with influencers and journalists that will help grow the brand and inspire travel. While the typical events Visit Billings attends, such as Public Relations Society of America Travel and Tourism Conference and North America Travel Blog Exchange haven't returned, past attendance has allowed the team to build relationships for the influencer program.</p> <p>With the positive news on vaccinations and reopening, Visit Billings has begun reaching out to potential influencers to visit the area in Summer and Fall of 2021. In addition to inviting journalists and influencers to visit the region to experience Montana's Trailhead for themselves (and of course by extension share that experience with their readers), Visit Billings will be regularly and consistently reaching out to regional and national media with news angles and stories as we introduce new tourism product in the region, whether it be a new hiking trail, a new restaurant, or a special seasonal beer from one of our breweries.</p> <p>This frequent contact will help further develop critical relationships with</p>	<p>Executing successful itineraries that elevated the destination's brand of Montana's Trailhead will help lead to a successful method under Publicity/Fam Trips.</p> <p>Relationships with journalists, influencers, meeting planners, tour operators, and sports event planners is key to success in this method as well as itineraries are executed such reporting would be made available listing points of contacts from fam trips.</p> <p>We will measure success by the publicity/earned media garnered from the influencers (social media posts, blogs, photos, etc.).</p> <p>For photo library additions, Visit Billings will measure success by tracking the number of images obtained and the budget expended to do so.</p> <p>The goal will be to obtain 15 quality images using the budget or less than the approved budget for this method.</p>	\$10,000.00	

		<p>RELATIONSHIP BUILDING/NETWORKING</p> <p>Continuing to build relationships with journalists and influencers who best fit the destination's brand, needs and budget will be a focus for FY22. The benefits of a social media influencer with the right targeted following plays a significant role in adding Billings to the consideration set of new audiences.</p> <p>PHOTO LIBRARY</p> <p>The objective of enhancing a photo/video library is to increase the number of assets for Visit Billings, stakeholders, MOTBD, and tourism partners.</p> <p>Having fresh, relevant, and targeted images is key to properly market a destination.</p> <p>Visually compelling and INSPIRING photography increases engagement across all media applications, whether it be increasing the view rate of an article, swaying a consumer's selection process or improving social media interaction. Articles containing relevant images have 94% more total views than articles without images, on average (JuffBullas.com). Given the visual age we live in, the power of strong photography cannot be emphasized enough.</p> <p>This year, Visit Billings/Billings CVB will execute a photo shoot and to purchase custom photos that capture specific scenes that help market the destination and help enhance successful campaigns for the leisure and group tour markets.</p>	<p>travel media and influencers, and generate an increase in editorial coverage for the destination.</p> <p>PHOTOS</p> <p>Maintaining an inventory of current Billings-specific photographs is critical in representing the destination in a relevant, fresh and compelling manner. Visit Billings makes a year-round effort to acquire imagery that supports marketing efforts, and showcases iconic Billings.</p>				
Research	Survey/Data Collection	<p>Understanding the characteristics, preferences, attitudes, and opinions of visitors and the travel trade is an important starting point for any tourism destination.</p> <p>Market Research can also assist in identifying new markets and in monitoring the performance of each sector.</p>	<p>In addition to developing a comprehensive, multi-segment Billings area visitor profile, data from other research sources is greatly important to visitor growth in Billings.</p> <p>Data and reporting is used to estimate the</p>	<p>Visit Billings staff will contract, gather, review, and report Smith Travel Research data, VisaVue data, AirDNA data, and ITRR reporting to stakeholders, boards, parnters, agencies, and the community to help assess marketing, sales, and promotions as well as</p>	\$26,300.00		

		<p>In 2017, the Billings Tourism Business Improvement District contracted research services with Destination Analysts. Key Visitor Industry Statistics included:</p> <p>2,600,984 visitors travel to Billings annually.</p> <p>The economic impact of visitation to Billings is \$865,121,041, annually.</p> <p>Nearly 10,000 jobs are supported by the tourism industry in Billings, a city with a population of 110,000.</p> <p>Tracking and compiling this type of data is key to growing visitation at Montana's Trailhead.</p>	<p>economic impact of tourism to Billings.</p> <p>At the same time, understanding the characteristics, preferences, attitudes, and opinions of visitors and the travel trade is an important starting point for any tourism destination.</p> <p>Market Research can also assist in identifying new markets and in monitoring the performance of each sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed trip characteristics (i.e. tripographic information like the reason for visiting the Billings area, length of stay, place of stay, etc.) • Travel party composition • Activities & attractions visited in the Billings area • Evaluation of Billings brand attributes • Detailed Billings visitor spending estimates • Travel planning resources used by Billings area visitors • Visitor satisfaction • Visitor demographics 	<p>look for weaknesses in seasons and/or weekends where growth is necessary to boost year-round visitation to the destination.</p> <p>Smith Travel Research Reports are weekly and monthly citywide offerings.</p> <p>VisaVue offers domestic reporting on visitor spending every quarter.</p> <p>AirDNA will be a new partnership for the Billings CVB, reporting timelines and dashboard offerings are TBD.</p> <p>ITRR reports vary and while they aren't paid for in this budget, they help with the overall profile and picture of visitation to Billings and/or Yellowstone County.</p>			
							\$351,000.00

Marketing Method Budget

Marketing Segment	Marketing Method	Bed tax funded budget
Consumer	Multi-Media Marketing	\$185,000.00
Consumer	Social Media	\$2,500.00

Consumer	Joint Ventures	\$53,400.00
Consumer	Opportunity Marketing	\$1,000.00
Consumer	Website/Internet Development/Updates	\$4,810.57
		\$246,710.57
Film	Opportunity Marketing	\$1,000.00
		\$1,000.00
Group Marketing	Multi-Media Marketing	\$40,000.00
Group Marketing	Travel/Trade Shows	\$6,750.00
		\$46,750.00
Marketing Support	Ad Agency Services	\$36,000.00
Marketing Support	Administration	\$70,200.00
Marketing Support	Fulfillment/Telemarketing/Call Center	\$20,000.00
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	\$1,500.00
Marketing Support	Printed Material	\$3,000.00
Marketing Support	Professional Development	\$1,850.00
		\$132,550.00
Publicity	Fam Trips	\$18,000.00
		\$18,000.00
Research	Survey/Data Collection	\$26,300.00
		\$26,300.00
		\$471,310.57

Miscellaneous Attachments

Description	File Name	File Size
Pie Charts and Budget Tables	FY22 Budgets and Pie Charts - Visit Billings.pdf	3.3 MB
FY22 Marketing Plan and Budget Billings CVB Visit Billings	FY22 Marketing Plan for Billings CVB . Visit Billings.pdf	9.5 MB

Reg/CVB Required Documents

Description	File Name	File Size
Required Documents for FY22 - Billings CVB	State Required Documents FY22 - Billings CVB.pdf	837 KB

