



**Grant Details**

**108656 - FY22 Region/CVB Marketing Plan**

113975 - FY 21-22 Destination Missoula Marketing Plan

DOC Office of Tourism

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**Comments**  
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**Community & Brand Support**

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

**PREFACE**

Last year we faced unprecedented times as the COVID-19 pandemic spread throughout the world and took its toll on virtually every community, Missoula being no exception. We had no way of knowing how long this crisis would last when writing last year's marketing plan, but we recognized the immense challenges ahead and decided to focus our marketing efforts on educating and uplifting our own community, as well as inspiring future travel when safe. While the COVID-19 pandemic is still present and we are continuing those same efforts, we are also optimistic that Montana will see a substantial increase in travel as more and more people receive the vaccine, normalize safety precautions such as masks, and get ready to re-enter the world.

The past year required a tremendous amount of creativity, flexibility and responsiveness in order to stay on top of the pandemic's status in Missoula and deliver the right messaging as it evolved. As the outbreak began in March 2020, the organization made immediate, major adjustments to our mission and goals, and refocused our efforts on two main objectives: (1) to share a message of unity and strength throughout the community of Missoula and (2) inspire future travel. While we had to pivot and adjust our strategy constantly in order to keep up with the pandemic and changing sentiments, we were able to stick to those two objectives and see widespread success. Destination Missoula quickly became a leading voice in the community, starting with our More Missoula campaign. More Missoula utilized video, social media, our website, and digital and broadcast advertising to reach every corner of our community with

a message of unity and care—the message that we were “More Missoula Than Ever” as we stepped up to support local and keep each other safe. We received an overwhelmingly positive and heartfelt response from our community. As time went on and Montana entered its phased reopening, we pivoted yet again and introduced our Safer Missoula campaign, which combined our message of unity with a strong, educational voice on health and safety precautions. We positioned ourselves as a resource for locals, visitors and businesses, and gained quick community buy in. Our “Smart. Safe. Ready.” materials can still be seen around town, advising people on how to stay safe while exploring Missoula. Most recently, we kicked off our Heroes of Hospitality program that highlights and honors the essential workers who keep our hospitality industry alive. We held a contest for the hotel industry to nominate deserving people in their industry. Nominations were entered into a prize contest. We then picked the top five to be considered for Hospitality Hero of the Year. All five were featured in videos featured on our website and the Hero was chosen. Our goal was to feature exceptional hotel staff in the community and show appreciation for their hard work during the pandemic, and so far we’ve seen an incredible response to Heroes and Hospitality and only expect the program to grow and expand to all sectors of the hospitality industry. <https://destinationmissoula.org/heroes-of-hospitality>

On top of the growing health crisis, 2020 brought social unrest as well as progress in response to police brutality and the growing Black Lives Matter Movement. Despite being in a predominantly white state, Missoula is a diverse and accepting community that welcomes people from all walks of life, and we made an effort to show true representation for all Missoulians in our messaging, from our refugee families, to our American Indian community, to our international students at UM. It is our goal to continue representing Missoula in a way that is thoughtful, welcoming and inclusive to all.

In 2021/2022 we will maintain last year’s objective, but slowly shift our messaging to encourage safe and responsible travel to Missoula when people feel ready, and educate our community about the economic importance of reopening our doors to visitors. We saw an incredible response to our local messaging last year, but we know that the same exact approach will not resonate in 2021/2022 as people experience “COVID fatigue” and grow more anxious for a sense of normalcy. We expect to see more and more visitors looking to escape to destinations like Missoula with outdoor recreation and less dense populations, especially after putting travel plans on hold for the past year. As travel increases, it’s important that we continue to position ourselves as a resource for the local tourism industry, and educate our locals and visitors on respectful, responsible ways to enjoy and support our community.

This year we plan on returning to our normal marketing strategy by targeting in-state travelers, regional drive markets and direct flight markets. Our first focus will be on regional drive markets and in-state travelers, and we will cautiously start using call to action language alongside our consistent safety messaging to “travel safely and responsibly.” We know that safety is an issue for travelers and we want to make it clear that Missoula is a responsible community that continues to take safety guidelines seriously.

Though the tourism industry took a massive blow from this crisis last year, it is now the industry that will lead the recovery for much of our state, and our city. As we have shown so many times before, we are resilient and can respond quickly to market changes. Missoula has the perfect combination of assets to continue rebounding quickly – safety, abundant recreation, clean air and water, inspirational arts, history and culture, unique attractions and, most importantly, wide-open spaces and relatively few people. Overall, we’re optimistic about the tourism year to come and confident in our community’s ability to welcome visitors back responsibly.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **THERE’S THIS PLACE**

Destination Missoula is committed to upholding the Montana State Tourism brand pillars while promoting Missoula as a unique and transcendent destination where wanderlust is indulged and discovery is a given.

As we market Missoula we play to its strengths, of which there are a multitude. We also think ahead and take into account opportunities on the horizon that we can use to Destination Missoula’s advantage. As a team, we keep our eyes open to inevitable challenges and work toward solving them efficiently and effectively. And we do it all with a foundation of pure gratitude that we get to live in and tout such an exceptional place.

### **IDENTITY**

In a valley that unfolds at the confluence of three rivers and seven wilderness areas, Missoula, Montana, is anything but ordinary. Here, nature inspires a philosophy of slowing your pace to mountain time, living out loud and taking it all in. Adventure is always top of mind in this paradise where recreation is second-to-none and a balanced and full life is priority number one.

Missoula is the second-largest city in Montana, but to those visitors from large urban areas, Missoula is a vibrant, eclectic and authentic small town bursting with charm and personality, perfectly situated halfway between Montana’s two awe-inspiring treasures—Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks.

Served by the Missoula Montana Airport and three major highways, Missoula is the ideal hub from which to explore the many wonders of Montana. Accessibility to world-class recreation makes Missoula an unparalleled place for outdoor exploration. Where else can you hit up one of the West’s best farmers markets, kayak or river surf right downtown, and hike or bike an epically scenic trail in 60,000 acres of wilderness (and wash it all down with a finely-crafted Montana beer, good food and friendly conversation at a local brewery) all in the same day?

Missoula is also a regional destination for shopping and dining, featuring three distinct shopping districts and an abundance of eateries and places to drink—like fine dining, authentic steakhouses, food trucks, iconic taco joints, cafés, coffee shops, distilleries and taprooms—with something to fit all budgets and palates.

Missoula is Montana’s most cosmopolitan and diverse community and the heart of arts and culture in the state, blending contemporary culture and historical heritage seamlessly. Visitors find this arts and cultural hub brimming with a seemingly endless array of entertainment and events. Think symphony, theater, film festivals, nationally recognized artists live in concert, author readings at independent bookstores, college sports, ballet, opera and even roller derby. And, Missoula proudly lives our history, from Native Americans and the Lewis and Clark Expedition to smokejumpers and Glacial Lake Missoula. Missoula is also a regional hub and state leader in commerce, education and health care.

Some might call it unique, cool or hip. Others will experience it as serene, welcoming and replete with natural beauty. Missoula is alive, pulsating with a unique small mountain-town spirit, offering pristine open spaces, places to go, incredible things to see and do and the best people around. Missoula’s unique character is shown through marketing efforts, while incorporating brand fonts, colors and stunning, authentic imagery.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Marketing Missoula and surrounding areas as a premiere travel destination, thereby creating vibrant growth in the economy and enhancing quality of life.

## **STRENGTHS**

### **ARTS AND CULTURE**

Nurtured by nature, culture is alive and well in Missoula, home to the most diverse and extensive arts and music community in Montana. From writers to performing artists, from painters to photographers, from historians to museum curators, all are inspired by the beauty, charm and roots of their surroundings. Missoula is fortunate to be home to numerous famous and creative people who add a dimension and depth to the community that is usually only seen in larger cities. Regionally, nationally and, in many cases, internationally renowned, Missoula’s cultural community creates an essence that urban travelers want but do not expect in Montana, making Missoula a surprisingly unique destination with an allure that draws visitors back again and again.

While 2020 brought unprecedented hardship for Missoula’s arts community, it also highlighted the incredible resilience and creativity of our artists, creators and organizations. Rather than succumb to shutdowns and setbacks, they

responded to the pandemic with innovative new ways to engage the community, from streamed concerts to virtual gallery tours. The support we've seen for our arts in 2020 makes us more optimistic than ever for 2021/2022.

## IMMEDIACY OF ACCESS

In Missoula, the great outdoors really are right outside your door and a river really does run through it. On any given day anglers are gracefully casting in the Clark Fork River. Downstream, kayakers and river surfers perform athletic feats atop the man-made Brennan's Wave. Tubing is an alternative form of transportation in the summer as people ride the river right through town, sometimes on their lunch breaks! Off the water, the trail system that crisscrosses the city keeps people grounded, and bicyclists ride on the country's friendliest streets. The surrounding hills and mountains offer a powder paradise for winter lovers, like backcountry and cross-country skiing, plus Montana's Snowbowl, providing downhill adventure right in Missoula's backyard. So, whether you run, ski, paddleboard, river surf, kayak, bike, hunt, fish, hike, backpack, float or camp, you can indulge your passion in and minutes from Missoula.

## REGIONAL HUB

Missoula is a regional center for retail, health care, education, forestry, ecology, transportation and culture. People come from across the state and region to shop in Missoula's historic downtown boutiques and at Southgate Mall—Western Montana's largest mall. The preeminent health care provided by renowned physicians and hospitals makes Missoula a center for Western Montana's health care. Home to the University of Montana, Missoula hosts students from around the world who seek an education that is highly valued and recognized on a campus that is one of the country's most picturesque. This level of education also produces a population of "top in the field" professionals who work in and serve our community. In order to support these industries, Missoula must also be a transportation hub. Missoula can be reached by two major highways—U.S. Highway 93 and State Highway 200—and Interstate Highway 90. The Missoula Montana Airport hosts six major air carriers and has non-stop flights to Portland, Seattle, San Francisco, Oakland, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Las Vegas, Denver, Atlanta, Minneapolis, Dallas, Salt Lake City, San Diego, San Jose, Orange County and Chicago. With more seats in the market than last year, Missoula is quickly becoming an accessible and affordable destination hub. The Missoula airport is currently undergoing a massive expansion project and by 2022, there will be more terminals and more flights into Missoula.

Despite the pandemic's massive toll on the airline industry, air travel in Missoula grew with three new direct routes and expanded service on four existing routes. Due to the fact that we didn't seek out these added flights and still continue to expand, we predict that destinations like Montana will keep growing in popularity over the coming years.

## NON-STOP FLIGHTS TO MISSOULA

- SEATTLE
- PORTLAND
- MINNEAPOLIS/ST.PAUL
- SALT LAKE CITY
- OAKLAND\*
- CHICAGO\*
- DENVER
- SAN FRANCISCO
- LAS VEGAS
- LOS ANGELES
- ATLANTA\*
- PHOENIX/MESA
- DALLAS
- SAN JOSE
- SAN DIEGO
- ORANGE COUNTY

\* SEASONAL NONSTOP FLIGHTS

## SPORTS AND ADVENTURE

In Missoula, we play long after the game is over because our outfield is endless. Our proximity to three pristine rivers and seven wilderness areas, and within 100 miles of five ski areas, means adventure is virtually limitless here. We're a recreation hot spot where play is revered and where teams come together for the love of sport and play nurtured by natural beauty and fresh mountain air. Missoula is also home to a Minor League Team - The Missoula Paddleheads, UM Griz sporting events and the world-famous Missoula Marathon. This Boston qualifying race has been named #1 marathon for three years straight by Runner's World, and in 2019 was named the #3 marathon in the U.S. and a top 5 "race-cation" destination by BibRave. Runner's World was quoted as saying:

"For Missoula, a ton of runners cited the community support being second to none,' said Jessica Murphy, cofounder of BibRave. 'The entire town really comes out to support the race all weekend long.' Not only that, but the constant view of the mountains serves as inspiration for runners. This flat, Boston-qualifying course is sure to please." (Runner's World 2019).

Having also hosted such events as the U.S. Freestyle Kayak Championships, USA Cycling Pro XCT and USA Cycling Collegiate Men's Mountain Bike Championship for two years, Missoula has a proven track record for hosting major recreation-based events. Missoula's Minor League Baseball team, the Missoula PaddleHeads (formerly the Osprey) won the "Best New Look" Logo contest from the MLB in 2019, and their stadium at Ogren Park offers a great spot to enjoy baseball and the sun under Missoula's summer skies.

Missoula successfully hosted the 2017 and 2018 USA Cycling Collegiate Mountain Bike National Championships. Destination Missoula and the Missoula Tourism Business Improvement District worked for a number of years in close collaboration with the USAC to bring this opportunity into Montana. Through a close partnership with the biking community in Missoula and Destination Missoula's proven track record with Missoula XC, Destination Missoula has been able to bring top collegiate athletes and future Olympians from across the country to compete in Missoula. By successfully hosting these events at the collegiate level, Missoula is now on track to successfully bid for USAC professional racing.

Missoula is also proud to be the host city for University of Montana athletics, where Montana Grizzly pride runs deep. Grizzly athletics brings people from across the region to enjoy Missoula's unwavering tradition of college sports. Facing a year without Grizzly Athletics in 2020 was challenging for our community and disappointing for our Griz fans, but we are hopeful for its safe return in 2021 and will monitor the situation closely. We know people will be eager to visit Missoula and return to the legendary Washington Grizzly Stadium when the time is right. In January of 2020, Stadium Journey Magazine ranked all the FCS stadiums across the country, and Washington Grizzly Stadium came in as #2. Stadiums were ranked on food and beverage inside the stadium, overall atmosphere, neighborhood where the stadium resides, the fans, access to and inside the stadium, overall return on investment and unique features not covered in other categories. "When one thinks of Montana one might think of wide open spaces. But Washington-Grizzly Stadium is wedged into the University of Montana campus at the junction of Mount Sentinel and the Clark Fork River with very little room to spare," says Jason Karp. "The density of the stadium and campus generates an energy that transmits to the tailgate parties happening on almost every spare patch of grass creating a festive environment on game day in Missoula."

Missoula's much-anticipated Fort Missoula Regional Park made its debut in the spring of 2017, with the opening of the soccer/multi-use fields and facilities at the west end of the park. In June of 2018 the fully completed park was opened to the public. The regional park features a five-field, lighted softball complex with moveable fences, two additional softball fields, nine full-size multi-use fields for soccer, football, lacrosse and rugby, one lighted artificial turf multi-use field, pickleball, basketball and volleyball courts. The addition of these amenities allows Missoula to bid for and host major tournaments that Destination Missoula previously had not been able to for lack of infrastructure. These tournaments will have a significant economic impact on Missoula. This new park is the realization of a years-long effort to create a recreation epicenter in Missoula, including walking trails, open space, playgrounds, picnic shelters and pavilions, historic interpretation and more. Since the opening of the Park, Destination Missoula has supported their efforts with 20 leads to TBID hotels for a potential of over 10,459 room nights. While the majority of events were put on hold during 2020, we are watching for new opportunities in 2021/2022.

## MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT

Part of our charm is that we march to the beat of our own drum here in Missoula, and we wholeheartedly celebrate the mountain sound and the rhythm the rivers afford. Missoula's music scene is broad, running the gamut from orchestral to bluegrass and country to hip hop, and the city has hosted such icons as Pearl Jam, Paul McCartney, The Rolling Stones, Mumford and Sons, Chris Stapleton, Sheryl Crow and many more. Missoula's outdoor venues steal the scene during the summer. Ogren Park at Allegiance Field is a go-to for summer entertainment for crowds up to 10,000 people. Summer 2017 saw two outdoor amphitheatres open. Big Sky Brewing upgraded their concert facilities to feature an amphitheater next to the brewery with a capacity of 5,000. The 4,000 seat Kettlehouse Amphitheater in Bonner (7 miles from Missoula) sits along the banks of the beautiful Blackfoot River. With a vast and seemingly endless array of arts and entertainment events and an abundance of restaurants, cafés, coffee houses, breweries, wine bars and distilleries, having fun off the trail is just as easy to do. The varied music venues in Missoula are receiving national acclaim with The Top Hat and The Wilma listed in Pollstar's Top 100 Clubs and the Kettlehouse Amphitheater listed in the Top 100 Amphitheatres in the US!

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, our line up for 2020 was wildly impressive, with headliners including Guns N Roses, Brandi Carlile, Ben Folds, Vampire Weekend and Avett Brothers scheduled to hit the stage. Unfortunately all scheduled concerts were canceled or postponed to help slow the spread, but we're hopeful for a safe return to live music in 2021. If the current line up is able to move ahead without cancellations, we've got a lively summer ahead with the Avett Brothers, Trampled by Turtles, Caamp, the Decemberists, Joe Russo's Almost Dead, Louis the Child and more scheduled to perform.

## NIGHTLIFE

For a small town, Missoula surprises with a nightlife scene that is the perfect combination of laid back and trendy. Whether visitors are looking for upscale dining and cocktails or dive atmospheres, they will find affordable fare, great ambiance and many options throughout the entire town. The Dram Shop opening up in the Southgate Mall neighborhood provides a downtown flare to an area where many visitors stay outside of the heart of the city. First Friday Gallery Night is consistently a favorite for visitors where they can mingle with locals, have complimentary beverages and snacks and take in local artwork. The additional storefronts in the Mercantile Building have provided increased options for dining and nightlife and extended the already-vibrant downtown scene in Missoula. Despite the impact COVID-19 shutdowns and regulations had on businesses in this sector, multiple new bars and restaurants were able to open and thrive in 2020, with even more scheduled to open in 2021. The state of Montana also allowed the sale of to-go alcohol, allowing numerous bars and breweries to keep pouring from a safe distance.

## TBID PARTNERSHIP

TBID and private funding enhance bed tax funded programs and support Destination Missoula's overall mission. Working with TBID has proven to be a great strength when it comes to establishing future goals and budgets, and we look forward to their continued support in 2021.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### TRANSPORTATION

In January 2015, Mountain Line began a three-year Zero-Fare demonstration project with a goal of expanding total ridership by 45%. Since the program began, ridership has increased by almost 70 percent, growing from just over 900,000 rides in 2014 to now more than 1.5 million rides annually on their fixed-route system alone. Zero-Fare bus service improves the quality of life for Missoula's entire community because more transit riders means better air quality, less traffic and parking congestion, more students getting to class, more employees getting to work, and more seniors and people with disabilities staying active and mobile. Destination Missoula—with partners from across the community—contribute to make Zero-Fare a reality and feel that it is an example to other Montana communities. It is a huge benefit to visitors who wish to explore the city but have opted not to rent a car, as there is service from the Missoula Montana Airport to all reaches of town. Mountain Line launched six zero-emissions, all electric buses to their fleet in the summer of 2019, and they saw strong support of both Zero-Fare and their agency during the November 2020 election, when Mountain Line's mill levy increase request passed by a significant majority—one of the largest margins of victory for any tax initiative in over a decade. The new mill levy will primarily fund planned service expansions, and Mountain Line will be offering 28 percent more service starting in January 2022, including later-evening and full weekend service.

UBER and LYFT are also available transportation sources for the Missoula community. These app-based services put a ride or a delivery at your fingertips. It also provides a flexible source of income for Missoulians.

In 2020, the Missoula International Airport (MSO) was anticipating another record setting year before COVID-19 hit. In 2019 MSO handled 907,777 passengers—a 7% increase over 2018—but that number dropped to 100 passengers per day in Spring 2020. However, as restrictions are being lifted and vaccines are made available to people across the country, MSO is seeing numbers slowly rise back to normal. They are presently operating at approximately 60% of normal capacity and continue to grow. The silver lining to COVID-19's impact on the airline industry is that airlines have taken this opportunity to invest in different markets, and Missoula has been a big beneficiary. Alaska Airlines announced new direct flights into San Diego, San Jose, San Francisco and Los Angeles; Allegiant Airlines into Orange County and Portland; American Airlines into Los Angeles and additional Dallas flights; and United Airlines with a new seasonal flight to Los Angeles. We are increasingly optimistic about the influx of new flights despite the past year of events.

## ECONOMIC UPTURN

Despite the many challenges our economy faced in 2020, Missoula continues to see new growth in sectors that directly relate to tourism. Many new retail stores, restaurants and breweries have opened or are slated to open in Missoula in all three shopping districts, and we expect to see new hotels opening, existing hotels renovating, increased private student housing in the city core and the complete reconstruction of our airport to accommodate our

increasing demand for air service. Southgate Mall's expansion, including the announcement that a SCHEELS store will be opening in 2021, will create even more opportunities for economic growth. Countless leaders in Missoula's economic growth share our sentiment, including the CEO of Washington Prime, who purchased Southgate Mall back in 2018:

"Visit the website [destinationmissoula.org](http://destinationmissoula.org) and the first thing which pops up is a series of vignettes which espouse the virtues of Missoula," Conforti said in a statement. "Having now visited Southgate Mall several times over the previous 18 months, I am pleased to report every single one of them is true ... music, dining, culture and especially the one which proclaims 'the great outdoors are right outside your door.'" Conforti went on to say that the store will cater to people seeking a variety of adventures. "With this in mind, there was only one logical choice to satisfy every hiking, skiing, skating, baseballing, boxing, softballing, cycling, hunting, swimming, soccering, fishing, running, camping, spectating, yogaing (just to name a few) needs of active Missoulians, and we're pleased to announce it is SCHEELS," he said. "They're one of the best merchants out there for the simple reason they respect their customers and colleagues (they're employee owned) and their stores are really cool." - Lou Conforti, CEO Washington Prime

## INFRASTRUCTURE

The face of Missoula is changing rapidly, all the while preserving the heart of what makes this community one truly extraordinary place. These are a few of the major projects that will be completed within the next few years:

**MID-TOWN GROWTH** – Southgate Mall is in the middle of a 70,000-square-foot expansion project bringing new dining, shopping, entertainment, residential housing, retail and office space to the midtown district of Missoula. With more than \$64 million in private investments and additional funding from the City of Missoula, this project has created a new street network in the surrounding neighborhoods to create ease of access for these neighborhoods to surrounding schools and entertainment options, and to enhance livability and raise property values. This multi-year project will create \$320,000 per year in new property taxes, 700 new construction jobs and 375 new permanent jobs, and it will safeguard 1,250 existing jobs. 2019 did bring some unexpected closures—due to national corporate decisions, Missoula's midtown lost both Lucky's Market and JC Penny at Southgate Mall. While these closures were a sad reality to this area, Southgate Mall's renovations have begun to attract more big brand names, such as SCHEELS, and we anticipate many more restaurants and retail stores will take over the newly renovated storefronts at Southgate Mall.

In recent years, Midtown Missoula has seen new businesses including Cambie Taphouse + Coffee and WinCO, as well as local favorites expanding from downtown to Midtown, including Dram Shop, Notorious P.I.G., Big Dipper, Bridge Pizza, The Trail Head, and El Cazador. The opening of second storefronts from these Missoula treasures has only served, and will continue to serve, to enhance the charm of the Midtown area and bring local Missoula flavors to an area of town that was once known primarily for larger branded stores.

Additionally, the Missoula Fairgrounds, home to the Western Montana Fair and other large special events, plans to expand their footprint, including the expansion of the ice rink, building a Butterfly House and Community Gardens, and improved work on the commercial building, with the goal of accessibility.

**DOWNTOWN MISSOULA REVITALIZATION** – Downtown Missoula has recently seen an influx of new businesses which are adding a fresh new face to the town. The Mercantile Building has brought a number of new storefronts including ZooThai, The Camino, Sobba Cycle, Basal, 1889 Steakhouse, the Montana Scene, Olive and Iron and CREATE Art Bar. Also, the downtown has seen the recent addition of Stave & Hoop, Pangea, Front Street Pizza, Ducrey Chocolate, Pink Elephant, Crafted, Clover, Rhapsody Montana, Cranky Sam's, Mountain Time Bowls and Buns and the newly renovated Old Post.

**MORE NEW BUSINESS TO MISSOULA** - On top of Missoula's downtown and midtown growth, we've seen new businesses popping up in previously overlooked areas of town. The Soup Farm opened up on Missoula's northside, Blackfoot River Outfitters opened on Russell St. and Panera Bread opened a location on Reserve St.

**MISSOULA PUBLIC LIBRARY** – The Missoula Public Library is the busiest library in the state, with 700,000 visitors annually, 60,000 cardholders and more than 1 million items loaned out per year. The original library wasn't equipped to meet the growing demand, and the building wasn't structurally sound to add more levels, so a public bond of \$30 million was passed to build the new library with \$5.5 million in private investment and an additional \$500,000 investment from the library and its foundation. The new library opened in 2021 to serve as a lifelong learning hub for Missoula County, a permanent anchor of downtown Missoula, and a popular cultural destination for Western Montana's many visitors. Features of the new library include:

- Five levels and increased parking
- Innovative partnerships with Children's Museum Missoula/Families First, UM SpectrUM Science Discovery Center, and Missoula Cable Access Television
- Collection growth from 200,000 to 600,000 eventual items
- Increased and improved access to learning tools and resources
- Energy efficiency, and the highest possible LEED certification
- Climate control for preserving Missoula's community history
- Tripled capacity for computer access and faster internet
- More public gathering spaces and meeting room flexibility

**SAWMILL DISTRICT** – Located on the southside of the Clark Fork just outside of downtown, the Sawmill District is a new-construction consisting of condos, restaurants, retail and office space. This includes the recent addition of The Sawyer, another private student housing project offering pod-style living with 57 units and 218 bedrooms. This trendy new neighborhood abuts the Riverfront Trail System, providing easy access to the rest of town, and is in close proximity to Ogren Park, the Missoula PaddleHead's Stadium at Allegiance Field, Silver Park, Currents Aquatic Center, MoBash Skate Park and numerous other recreational opportunities. Additionally, construction is underway for a new tech campus said to open up space for hundreds of new workers in the Sawmill District.

**MISSOULA MONTANA AIRPORT** – The Missoula Montana Airport \$110,000,000 expansion project is underway. The project will be completed in two phases and is expected to be completely finished in 2023. Demolition of the west terminal has begun. When complete, the new airport terminal will be approximately 175,000 sq. ft. and three stories with 8 gates over two concourses. The plans also include room for future expansion of the airport.

## CULINARY AND SPIRITS TOURISM

Two of the hottest trends in travel right now are culinary trips and spirits trips, and Missoula is the perfect place for both. The global culinary tourism market was valued at \$1,116.7 billion in 2019 and is expected a market value of \$1,796.5 billion by 2027, registering a CAGR of 16.8% from 2020 to 2027.

"Food has an unmatched ability to communicate a unique sense of place. Local cuisine provides a direct connection to the history of a region, the soul of its people, and the rhythm of daily life."

- Skift.com.

“Food tourism is nothing new, but its exponential growth is remaking how destinations position themselves in the global tourism market.”

–Greg Oates.

“Whereas travelers in past generations may have opted for the five-star hotel restaurant or the gourmet wine and cheese pairing event, culinary travelers are more interested in the local food experiences often usually reserved for the middle and lower-middle class residents of the place travelers visit. Farmers markets, food stalls, food trucks, pubs, and other more native food venues represent a sense of time and place for today’s culinary traveler, who is more predisposed to these type of food experiences than those in the fine dining world.

But authenticity is only one part of the equation. Culinary travelers also seek to explore the artistry, traditions, and heritage surrounding the food and beverages of a specific city, country, or region, as well as the people who create the food and drink of a certain place. Chefs, winemakers, brewers, farmers, and other artisans are held in high regard by today’s food tourist, and while the gourmet wine tasting might be a thing of the past, a behind-the-scenes demonstration of how the wine and cheese is actually produced is much more appealing to food tourists who desire to know more about the ingredients and processes of the end product.”

–DCS - Bon Appetit: The Rise of the Culinary Traveler

Missoula’s food scene has always been strong, but with the introduction of new retail and restaurant space downtown and Midtown, Missoula is witnessing a cultural food movement. Missoula’s continued growth in this sector sets us up solidly as a food travel destination. From Missoula’s locally sourced restaurants to our food trucks, breweries, distilleries, cider house and wineries, Missoula has the unique experiences these travelers expect. Unfortunately, the pandemic took an especially large toll on this industry as both travel and restaurants suffered throughout 2020, but Missoula is working hard to revive our food and beverage scene and come back stronger than ever. It’s our goal to help boost this sector through our marketing efforts in 2021/2022, and we’re actively looking for opportunities to do so.

#### RETAIN TRANSIENT VISITORS

Approximately 3.1 million people pass through Missoula annually, but only 1.5 million spend one or more nights in the community. Destination Missoula will be producing marketing campaigns directed specifically to Canadian visitors and concentrating on park-to-park visitors. Destination Missoula will also be working on initiatives such as wayfinding to entice visitors off the highways and to stay at least one night. The Missoula Downtown Partnership was awarded grant funding from the Montana Department of Commerce which is being used to strategically place informational kiosks in downtown Missoula. Last year, Destination Missoula produced new visitor center signage that coordinates and works within the wayfinding system and more easily identifies the visitor center location in the heart of downtown Missoula and this year will be adding a logoed awning above the Main Street entrance door.

#### TOURISM MASTER PLAN

While the pandemic put this project on hold for a year, Destination Missoula and the Missoula Tourism Business Improvement District will spearhead a Tourism Master Planning process for Missoula and the surrounding area. Destination Missoula’s goal is to create a community wide discussion based on extensive research regarding tourism’s role in Missoula. The plan will assess infrastructure and management needs into the future so that the Missoula community has a roadmap to balance our resources and our quality of life with the economic resources provided by a healthy tourism economy. The plan will encompass partners across our community from city and county government, outdoor recreation interests, the University of Montana, the business community, economic development to bring awareness of the tourism industry and to help guide the final plan. Extensive research will be done with Missoula’s visitors and also Missoula’s residents to explore the role tourism plays in helping to sustain and advance Missoula’s community values and quality of life.

#### CHALLENGES

##### AIR ACCESS

Missoula air service expansion is limited by the terminal facilities. The Missoula Montana Airport expansion is underway. The facilities will grow from four gates to eight and will be easily expandable for future growth. It will be intuitive and efficient to navigate and will have all the amenities passengers desire in a modern terminal while still maintaining the uniqueness that one would expect from a Montana airport. Construction is being done in two phases. Phase One is estimated to open in February of 2022. If everything stays on schedule, the second phase will be completed in late 2023. Destination Missoula works closely in partnership with the Missoula Montana Airport to continually investigate and expand service and new direct flights into Missoula. The Missoula Tourism Business Improvement is also a major sponsor for flight guaranty funds to help initiate new direct flights. Towards this end, Destination Missoula is working in partnership with the Missoula Montana Airport, Missoula Economic Partnership and other private and public entities in Missoula to form a coalition of funding partners for new flights in order to remain competitive. That being said, until the terminal and gates are expanded, Missoula is limited in its ability to bring new airlines into the market. Destination Missoula will continue to concentrate on expanding seasonal to year-round flights in the routes that make sense.

##### SEASONALITY

Although Missoula has a more balanced annual visitation than most Montana cities, the vast majority is within the months of April through October, leaving over \$20 million in vacant room nights during the months of November through March. Since Missoula is not a major winter destination, Destination Missoula will continue to center marketing efforts to bolster Missoula’s shoulder seasons through group and tour travel, sporting and cultural events, and meetings and conventions. This marketing strategy is having an effect as Missoula’s annual occupancy numbers have risen from 55.8% seven years ago to 64.3% in 2018-19, an increase of 8.5%.

##### CLIMATE CONCERNS

Climate change has created unpredictable conditions for tourism, especially in the late spring and early summer seasons. It is hard to say if the river will flood and be too high for floating and fishing in June, or if the coloration will mimic the gorgeous summertime photos that are spread to inspire people to visit. The dry summers have created fire conditions that have impacted travel to Missoula. The unpredictability caused by climate change is proving a challenge when advising visitors on travel timetables and plans. Winter sports are also impacted by climate change, as it is hard to determine if snowshoeing, cross country skiing, snowmobiling and downhill skiing are activities that can be conducted as early or late as once was the norm.

##### AIRBNB

Airbnbs and other short term rentals through private individuals have historically been a strain on organizations like Destination Missoula who rely on TBID and bed tax funding. However, even though Airbnbs are now required to pay the same taxes as hotels, they still create a strain to the community at large and to the traditional hotel industry that so much of Missoula tourism was built around. While having Airbnb rental options is a benefit to attract younger travelers, Missoula has seen an increase in housing prices, including investments in second homes or rental-only homes, which has made it challenging for locals to obtain affordable housing. Airbnbs typically offer lower prices than hotels or group accommodations that hotels cannot compete with, and this reality is putting a strain on hotels and their employees.

##### LOW CONVERSION OF TRANSIENT TRAVEL

As mentioned in Opportunities, Missoula does not convert approximately 1.5 million transient travelers a year, who either drive through or stop shortly for gas and to eat but do not spend the night. It is difficult to pull them off the interstate. Destination Missoula will be continuing marketing campaigns directed specifically to Canadian visitors when the border opens and concentrating on park-to- park visitors. Destination Missoula will also be working on initiatives such as wayfinding to entice pass-through visitors to stay at least one night.

## INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

Although Destination Missoula, through our sales department, will continue to focus efforts on increasing and broadening our group and tour travel, it will definitely be another year of uncertainty in this sector as COVID-19 restrictions continue to change. International tourism was all but halted in 2020 and still hasn't completely reopened throughout the world, but we're monitoring things closely and keeping an eye out for opportunities as borders reopen to nonessential travel. Given the unknown impacts of COVID-19, it is unclear at this point how our international travel market will be affected long term. When we feel international travel is safely picking up again, we plan on working in cooperation with the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development and Glacier Country Tourism to attend trade shows directly targeting these markets and looking to increase awareness of Missoula in international markets, specifically Canada, China and Western Europe. The United Kingdom remains the single largest destination for global long-travel and the third-largest destination for overall global travel, but our market share has declined considerably since 2015. After declining in 2016, total inbound travel to the U.S. grew by 0.7% in 2017 and 3.5% in 2018. Overseas travel grew by 2.0 percent in 2017 and 2.5% in 2018. Nevertheless, the U.S. continued to lose market share for a third straight year as global travel grew significantly faster. In 2018, the United States welcomed 80 million international visitors. These visitors stay on average 17.5 nights in the United States, visiting 1.4 states and spending approximately \$4,200

## LACK OF TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

Although Missoula has many wonderful venues, in order to take the next step in growth, there is a need for infrastructure currently missing in the community. The largest indoor arena is owned by the University of Montana, and although they are willing and accommodating partners, the university's schedule for the arena is paramount. Also, Missoula does not have any one facility with enough size to accommodate citywide conferences or conventions without the group utilizing multiple properties. In order to accommodate events of this size, Destination Missoula has to bid them out to a number of venues, which is not ideal to meeting and event planners.

## TIMELINE OF IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING FOR WAYFINDING

Although the Missoula Wayfinding project is through the planning stages, the time needed for fundraising a million-dollar project and the staged implementation of the system means a full completion of the system may be many years down the road. Destination Missoula is working with city and county government and leading organizations across the city to implement our Wayfinding system in a well-thought-out phased approach that takes available funding sources and the visitor experience into consideration.

## PARKING

With all of the new projects in downtown Missoula—especially new hotels and restaurants—and new employment opportunities, parking in downtown Missoula continues to be an issue until new parking facilities are built. Limited parking reduces access to the wonderful amenities that can be found in downtown Missoula. Luckily, Mountain Line bus does offer Park and Ride options for large events, providing much-needed access when parking is at its most limited.

## ORGANIZATIONAL FUNDING

With constantly trying to find new and innovative ways to raise private funding, and the lingering uncertainty of bed tax funding, stable funding for Destination Missoula is always an issue and a priority. Destination Missoula, in partnership with other tourism industry organizations, works on a continual basis to educate Missoula and Montana legislators and citizens on the importance of tourism to a healthy state economy and to work towards preserving and enhancing bed tax funding. Destination Missoula also works in partnership with the Missoula Tourism Business Improvement District to expand and to create new private revenue sources for Destination Missoula. Destination Missoula was successful in expanding to full participation in TBID in 2019.

## LACK OF COMMUNITY-WIDE STRATEGIC ORGANIZATION

Although Missoula is seeing progress in this realm, due to a lack of communication and a comprehensive event strategic plan, Missoula does not have cohesion and lacks strategic community organization of citywide events. It is difficult to maximize economic opportunities and enhance visitor experiences around events with the lack of cohesion. Another bright spot during the pandemic was the way leadership across Missoula came together to tackle issues and community clearly and calmly with our community. It is our hope that this successful cooperation and communication will continue in the years to come.

In the upcoming year if funding allows, Destination Missoula and the Missoula Tourism Business Improvement District hopes to begin an RFP process for a Tourism Master Plan for Missoula and the surrounding five valleys. It is the intention of the organizations to initiate research on both Missoula's citizens and visitors to help us better understand the optimal balance between Missoula's community and tourism. From that research and understanding and with community-wide input, Destination Missoula will create a vision and direction for tourism growth and infrastructure into the future, and how Destination Missoula's organizations can guide that plan to fruition.

## **Describe your destination.**

In order to convert a person from someone who may be interested in Missoula to an actual visitor to our destination, Destination Missoula must reach them at all three phases of the decision process—Inspiration, Orientation and Facilitation.

Destination Missoula will be following the state brand by using large iconic imagery and brand font in print and digital advertising, on the website and on social media. These images inspire people to visit Missoula and to see what is so utterly captivating and unique about it. Destination Missoula created the "There's This Place..." campaign to enhance this concept.

Video is the new language of brand communication, especially in inspiring millennial and Generation Z travelers, and social media has consistently been on the rise as a form of information for visitors. For these reasons, Destination Missoula has focused our efforts on increased video and photography to use in promotional materials and on social media. We focused heavily on social media and digital marketing in 2020 in order to reach and inspire people at home, and saw our efforts pay off through the continued growth of our social media following and engagement.

Destination Missoula will implement a number of tools that will help orient to where Missoula is in the country, region and state. Destination Missoula's unique official Missoula Area Visitor Guide gives people an overview of our community and what it has to offer, including maps, directions to our visitor centers, numbers to reach our call center, and the itinerary builder on our website gives visitors planning assistance virtually. The website is responsive to all devices for ease of use. This gives the visitor the opportunity to plan ahead where they will stay, eat, what attractions and events they want to attend and what loop tours they can take from Missoula to enjoy what this area has to offer. Finally, by using the itinerary builder or taking advantage of easy access to the information they need to book their trip, including the ability to talk to a knowledgeable travel expert on the phone (either through the call center or in

one of our Visitor Information Centers), or through the chat function of the website, Destination Missoula will help facilitate the final sale and a successful, memorable trip.

**Optional: Include attachments here**

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

**GEOGRAPHIC**

The strategy of targeting a particular type of traveler can be enhanced by also targeting a particular geographic area. It is most effective to market to those who are predisposed to come to this area.

Destination Missoula concentrates on more “niche” marketing, particularly direct flight and drive markets. Direct flight markets include Seattle, Salt Lake City, Las Vegas, Minneapolis, Chicago, Denver, Portland, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland, Atlanta, Dallas, San Diego, San Jose, Orange County, and Phoenix. Destination Missoula also directs our outreach to our drive markets, which includes an approximate 200 – 300-mile radius from Missoula: Spokane, Washington; Coeur d’Alene, Sandpoint, Lewiston, Boise, Salmon and Idaho Falls, Idaho; and Yellowstone Park, Bozeman, Butte, Great Falls, Glacier National Park, Kalispell, Montana; and Alberta, Canada.

To ensure the most effective use of marketing funds and energies, markets will be pursued in the following order:

- Non-stop flight markets including Seattle, Salt Lake City, Las Vegas, Minneapolis, Chicago, Portland, Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland, Atlanta, Dallas, San Diego, San Jose, Orange County, and Phoenix.
- Regional drive markets
- The primary states from which most inquiries come: Texas, California, Washington, Illinois, Florida, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Idaho, Ohio.
- The secondary states from which most inquiries come: Colorado, Georgia, Arizona, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Carolina, Tennessee, Indiana, Iowa.
- Residents from other parts of Montana.

**DEMOGRAPHIC**

In addition to the geographic target markets, there are demographic markets Destination Missoula will target with tourism promotion and marketing. Each of these markets represents a strong and growing segment of the tourism marketplace. Destination Missoula will pay particular attention through this marketing plan to niche marketing for small and mid-size market meetings, sporting events, signature events, arts and culture, music and entertainment, food and spirits, leisure and family travel. In previous years the average visitor to Missoula was 58 years of age with an income of \$100,000 – \$150,000, and 70% of visitors were either traveling alone or as a couple. However, we foresee this demographic shifting slightly after the past year due to younger people traveling more during the pandemic and an increase in car travel versus air travel. Groups of 1 – 3 travelers represent 88% of Missoula visitors, and family travel is heaviest during the summer months. The demographic markets are described on the following page.

**INDIVIDUAL TRAVELERS**

This group includes people traveling alone, adults traveling in small groups, and families. While these travelers may have taken advantage of a travel planner or the internet to facilitate their trip, they do not travel with a group and can be easily accommodated in one or two rooms and at any restaurant. Individual travelers come from all demographics. It is most important for Destination Missoula to concentrate its marketing efforts on the following:

- Active empty-nesters
- Baby boomers
- Business travelers
- Cultural and historical-experience travelers
- Family travel
- Leisure travelers
- Outdoor enthusiasts
- Motorcyclists
- Recreational vehicle travelers
- Women
- Geo-travelers
- Multigenerational travelers
- Culinary and spirits travelers
- LGBTQ travelers
- Adaptive travelers



- Music, concert and festival travelers
- Birders
- Sustainability travelers
- Wellness travelers
- Remote workers and students
- Last-minute travelers
- “Revenge travelers”
- In-state travelers

#### SPORTS TRAVELERS

The North American sports market totaled \$71.1 billion in 2018 and is projected to grow 3.2% annually, reaching \$83.1 billion in 2023. More than 150 million people attended professional sporting events. In 2018, sports travel made up 8% of the total domestic travel market, resulting in 190 million domestic trips to attend or participate in a sporting event. On average, sports travelers spend 3.9 nights in a destination and consist of 3.2 people. Nearly half of sports travelers bring their children, 10% are first-time visitors, and one-quarter of them included a flight on their travels. Domestic travelers attending or participating in a sporting event spent \$41 billion in 2018.

Youth sports has become a very large segment of the sports industry. It is estimated that it generates \$9 billion and is growing by up to 20% annually. The Youth Sports industry provides travel to Missoula from drive markets. Since Missoula is a regional hub for shopping and dining, many families can be inspired to use their youth sports trip to spend time in Missoula. Fort Missoula Regional Park, Glacier Ice Rink and the University of Montana sports facilities are exceptional venues to host youth soccer, baseball and softball, volleyball, football, hockey and more.

During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, Destination Missoula staff attended 2 sports trade shows and made 66 sports planner contacts. In addition, Destination Missoula’s sales staff generated 29 leads totaling 8,318 potential room nights for Missoula in the sports market. Unfortunately, the pandemic virtually halted much of the sports industry in Missoula but sales staff were able to continue to communicate with sports planners via virtual trade shows and industry webinars and roundtables. We are hopeful that sports tournaments and events will come back with renewed vigor once COVID-19 is under control.

Demographics are as follows:

- Primarily male, 18 – 54 years old, and strong internet users.
- Gender – 68% male, 32% female.
- 84% of all sport event travelers are spectators.
- Sports travelers tend to be affluent, college educated.
- Sports travelers are long-term travelers, travelling long into retirement.
- Willing to travel long distances, spending more time and money at destination.
- 58% of sports travelers will return to the destination on a family leisure trip.

#### GROUP TRAVELERS AND EVENT RECRUITMENT

Group travelers are looking toward small communities to provide the homey atmosphere, which implies safety and personal care. They want a high-touch experience in a high-tech world. To get what they want, they personally spend more in an area than individual travelers, and 43% – 60% of their total package cost stays in the destination’s economy. Niche markets that Missoula will be specifically targeting in group travel are motorcoach recruitment, motorcycle rallies, bicycle races and new-event recruitment including small weddings. During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, Destination Missoula staff attended one group tour/travel trade shows and made 26 group planner contacts. Several trade shows scheduled for the spring of 2020 were cancelled due to COVID-19. In addition, Missoula saw an estimated \$124,975 in economic impact from two events that received grant funding from the Missoula TBID Event Grant Fund. Two other events funded by the Missoula TBID Event Grant Fund were scheduled to take place in spring of 2020 but were cancelled due to COVID-19. After putting the grant program on hold in 2020, we are eager to pursue and grant money for new opportunities that bring significant economic impact to Missoula.

#### MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS

Missoula enjoys the distinction of having urban amenities close to those outdoor opportunities a visitor would expect to find in a resort setting, giving us an advantage over strictly urban or strictly resort destinations. This is a particularly strong advantage as people begin to gather in-person again with an increased concern for safety, and desire for fresh air and open spaces. Missoula can offer the amenities of a much more densely populated city, while still providing unbeatable access to outdoor recreation.

Meetings have many of the same needs as group gatherings and produce similar economic benefit to an area. Missoula is very well suited for small to large meetings where ideas are inspired by nature and nurtured by unexpected sophistication, and where hospitality, and amenities are top notch. This small town has big offerings delivered by Missoula’s service industry, which is second to none in terms of professionalism and warm hospitality. Missoula lets people come together in a world-class meeting place for corporate events, retreats, conferences and conventions. With the addition of new airline service and larger aircraft with additional seats coming into Missoula, the competition naturally decreases prices and Missoula becomes a more competitive flight destination, which will increase Missoula’s ability to compete with other markets for large meeting and convention travel.

Destination Missoula’s meetings and conventions websitemissoulameetings.com gives meeting planners the ability to research our amenities and services and to submit rfp’s online. Destination Missoula feels that a targeted print and online campaign is one of the most cost-effective means of reaching our target audience this year. This niche marketing will target industry-specific associations in our drive and direct fly markets, such as Spokane, Seattle, Portland, Minneapolis, Chicago and Dallas. We will also target direct flight markets including San Diego, San Jose, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Denver. Since Montana as a whole does not have a large presence at the meeting and convention shows, it is hard to make an impact against states and destinations that do have a large presence and offer better pricing. Through a print, online and social media campaign, plus attendance at specific trade shows, Destination Missoula can work with niche markets spreading what is unique about Missoula and the surrounding area that makes it worth the extra expense to hold a meeting here.

During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, Destination Missoula staff attended 6 meetings & convention trade shows and made 197 meeting planner contacts. In addition, Destination Missoula's sales staff generated 17 leads totaling 7,255 potential room nights for Missoula in the meetings market. The pandemic put much of the in-person meetings and trade shows on hold, but sales staff were able to attend virtual trade shows and educational webinars, facilitated round table discussions with local venues and event planners, and consistently communicated with meeting planners via email and phone. We are hopeful that 2021/2022 will bring new opportunities to the meetings and convention market.

*b. What are your emerging markets?*

## EMERGING MARKETS

The following areas are emerging tourism markets that Destination Missoula feels are a perfect fit for Missoula, and our marketing will be directly tailored to them:

### WELLNESS TRAVEL

The Global Wellness Institute estimates tourism grew into a \$639 billion market in 2017, and that number only stands to rise as more people get vaccinated for COVID-19 and feel it's safe to revisit their travel plans. World travelers made 830 million wellness trips in 2017, 139 million more than in 2015, according to the Global Wellness Institute. It used to be that food created the buzz that lured travelers to all sorts of destinations, but wellness is taking over as travelers seek out healthier, more active vacations. Food is still a draw, of course, but it is even more enticing if it satisfies a wellness craving. The hope is that if wellness travel is marketed in a strategic way, it can work to prevent overtourism, drawing people away from beyond-crowded cities and into more tranquil, less touristy locales that could use the economic boost. This desire for wellness and tranquility is more relevant than ever in light of the pandemic. Missoula is a great option for health and wellness travelers because of the sheer number of spas and workout studios in a relatively small area. Spas like Skin Chic, Apothecary Aesthetics, Sorella's, and Cedar Creek Spa and Salon provide options for wellness travelers while workout studios like Sobba Cycle, Hype House, Sweat Shop Studio and yoga studios like Inner Harmony Yoga, Hot House Yoga and Headwaters Hot Yoga provide space for visitors to workout in the downtown area. Missoula ranked number 1 on SmartAsset's Most Fitness-Friendly Places for 2018, and is ranked two for 2020 with 125 fitness businesses per 10,000 residents.

### MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT

More than 32 million people in the U.S. travel to attend at least one music festival per year. Of those 32 million, 14.7 million are millennials. Missoula's burgeoning music and entertainment scene is the perfect fit for this niche market. With nationally acclaimed venues such as The Top Hat and The Wilma Theatre, Big Sky Amphitheater and KettleHouse Amphitheater, we believe Missoula is going to continue to see the music scene explode over the next few years. Destination Missoula will actively partner with music venues to market to music writers and media to bring them to Missoula, and revisit our music-focused marketing as our music scene returns to its pre-pandemic status. Our music website for Missoula—[missoula.live](http://missoula.live)—will continue to give people a comprehensive view of the music and entertainment experiences that Missoula offers.

Pollstar named Missoula's Logjam Presents as #95 on their list of Top 100 World-Wide Promoters, with The Wilma taking #49 and on their list of Top 100 Clubs. Additionally, the KettleHouse Amphitheater landed #71 in their rankings of the Top 100 Outdoor Amphitheaters.

### FILM PRODUCTION

Missoula has a strong foundation when it comes to the arts and creative opportunities, and we believe film production is an emerging market with the potential to bring huge economic growth to Missoula. According to the "Economic Impact of Montana Film Production" report, film production in Montana had an economic impact of nearly \$50 million and supported the equivalent of 280 full-time jobs in 2019. In 2020 we saw the hit series "Yellowstone" leave Utah to relocate its production to Missoula, where it does much of its shooting. We will closely monitor new opportunities in this market throughout the year, including the proposed \$20 million film and television studio in a technology park west of Missoula.

### FLIGHT MARKETS

Missoula Montana Airport had a record-setting year in 2019. Missoula is serviced by six airlines and 16 nonstop destinations, which makes it comparable to much larger cities. Bringing American Airlines into the Missoula market created \$14 million in ticket price savings during 2018/2019. Additionally, even with the pandemic, MSO added new direct flights into Portland, San Francisco, San Diego, San Jose, Orange County and Los Angeles. As Missoula is constantly looking for opportunities to bring new service into Missoula, it is vitally important that Destination Missoula markets to any new service areas, as well as our existing direct flight markets to make sure our existing flights remain viable and service only continues to expand. With the \$110,000,000 airport expansion, additional gates, increased capacity, and passenger amenities, Missoula will only continue to grow as a destination for travelers.

### CULINARY

We currently see 39 million travelers identify themselves as culinary travelers. Annually, they created a \$201 billion economic impact. On average, they spend \$1,194 per trip with up to 50% spent directly on food and food-related activities. It is currently one of the fastest-growing sectors in tourism worldwide.

They tend to be younger, more affluent and better educated travelers. Millennials, having become the largest traveling demographic in the U.S., list culinary experiences as very important. They feel it is the best way to get to "know the story" of a place. Trends are moving from the most expensive dining experience to the most authentic. The culinary traveler is looking for a unique experience and likes packages based around cooking classes, farmers markets, gourmet food shopping, winery, brewery and distillery tours and festivals. Culinary travelers tend to plan ahead using both print and online media sources. With Missoula's exciting and varied food scene from fine dining and cafés, to farm-to-table sustainability, food trucks, breweries, wineries and distilleries, culinary tourism is a perfect niche to target. Exposure to the food scene has been, and will continue to be a priority when bringing in press writers, and we are actively looking for new opportunities to help Missoula's food and beverage industry by reaching more culinary travelers. The culinary industry, as well as the whole tourism industry, was particularly hard hit with the pandemic. Destination Missoula will focus on special projects throughout the year to help their recovery.

### CANADIAN TRAVEL

In 2018, it was estimated that Canadian visitors made up 10% (1,366,000) of all nonresident travelers to the state. Of those travelers, 45% were primarily "just passing through," 37% were in Montana for "vacation, recreation, or pleasure," and 9% were primarily in the state for "shopping." One of the more striking overall trends in Canadian visitation to Montana is the decrease in not only the number of Canadian residents visiting Montana, but also their reported spending. In 2013, ITRR estimated that 1.6 million Canadians visited Montana, spending an estimated \$306 million in the process. By 2018, estimates for the number of Canadian visitors dropped to 1.34 million, with expenditure estimates being cut almost in half at roughly \$155 million. The most visited region was Glacier Country with 71% of respondents having been there on a previous visit. When asked what would increase their likelihood to return to Montana, visitors said more information on new and different things to do, a wider range of retail shopping opportunities, increased opportunities to experience local cuisine and more opportunities to experience cultural heritage. Missoula has the ability to provide all of these experiences for Canadian travelers once the borders are open to nonessential travelers again. Destination Missoula will continue to monitor the COVID-19 travel restrictions, and revisit our marketing efforts to Canada when it is safe and smart to do so.

## LGBTQ+

LGBTQ+ travel is a \$211 billion industry in the U.S. These travelers average seven trips annually, four leisure and three business. Their average age is 48 with a household income of \$50,000 and up. They prefer mid-range hotels that understand their needs, and they tend to return to areas they feel do the best job of outreach and are safe and relaxing. LGBTQ+ travelers look for culture, arts, food and wine, rest and relaxation, and nature is important particularly to women. Of the 17 top cities they tend to visit, Missoula has direct flights into nine, and given the current political climate, Missoula's open and welcoming environment and status as a cultural hub make it a safe place for LGBTQ+ people to visit. The Missoula Art Museum's rainbow crosswalk across Pine street serves as a symbol of Missoula's diversity and openness to various identities.

## YOUTH SPORTS – SPORTS AND EVENTS

The youth sports travel sector is now a \$17 billion travel industry. The youth sports industry in the U.S. has ballooned to a \$15.3 billion business, and there has been more than 55% growth since 2010. It is estimated that more than 48.9 million kids between the ages of 5 and 18 currently play at least one organized sport each year in the U.S. and 21 million are involved in non-school youth sports. The average youth athlete plays 2.5 sports. Youth sports also generate family and multigenerational travel. 41% of children with a household income of \$100,000 or more participate in team sports and 19% of children with household incomes of \$25,000 or less participate. American families spent an average of \$3,167 per player/per sport on the road for what are now being called "tournaments." Missoula continues to see success in our Youth Sports Events market thanks to partners like the Montana High School Association, Missoula Youth Hockey Association and Fort Missoula Regional Park.

## MOTORCYCLE

Motorcycle travel is one of the fastest growing segments in tourism. It is a \$34 billion industry with over 11 million riders. The demographic trend has been older and more affluent as more baby boomer professionals become interested in motorcycle travel. The average HHI is \$85,000+ with 84% having attended college and 16% with postgraduate degrees. However, now you are starting to see more millennial riders. Women are becoming the fastest growing segment. Gen X women are three times more likely to own and regularly ride their bikes, and women motorcycle tour businesses are starting to thrive. An average trip lasts 10– 14 days, spending \$3,100 per trip. They also love to attend related events averaging three events per year spending an average of \$400 per weekend event attended.

A 2019 study released by the Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research, states that in 2018 393,800 nonresident motorcyclists visited the state. They spent approximately \$110/day and stayed an average of 2.45 nights. Total spending in quarters 2 and 3 of 2018 by nonresident motorcyclists was \$80,030,000. Ten percent of all visitors enter Montana on motorcycles and 4% spend one or more nights in Missoula.

Missoula is on a major route for riders coming from the West Coast and those wanting to see Glacier National Park. Destination Missoula will be doing specific niche marketing and website itineraries to market to these riders. More specifically, Missoula will be targeting women motorcycle riders. Destination Missoula is also seeing more interest from international tour operators in motorcycle itineraries for their clients and will create specific itineraries scoped to this market.

## INTERNATIONAL

The United States remains the single largest destination for global long-haul travel and the third-largest destination for overall global travel, but our market share has declined considerably since 2015 and fell sharply in 2020 due to COVID-19 travel restrictions and safety precautions. Total inbound international travel went from 79.4 million in 2019 to 19.4 million in 2020, travel spending and passenger fares went from \$179.1 million in 2019 to \$38.1 million in 2020, and direct travel jobs went from 1.2 million in 2019 to 0.4 million in 2020. On average each overseas traveler spends approximately \$4,200 and stays an average 18 nights and the top leisure travel activities for overseas visitors are shopping, sightseeing, fine dining, national parks/monuments, and amusement/theme parks. While we can't predict the short and long-term impact of the pandemic on international travel, we will continue to watch for opportunities in this emerging market.

## UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA FAMILY AND RECRUITS

The University of Montana is located in Missoula and comprised of students from all over the state, region and country, meaning prospective students and their families will visit Missoula when touring campus. During this time, students will have the opportunity to fall in love with Missoula as a place to live as well as attend school, and their families will continue to visit for events, sports, graduation and general visits. This is a huge benefit to Missoula as it allows a constant influx of visitors. Many graduates might then choose to live in Missoula, and those who do relocate will come back to their old college stomping grounds for decades to come. Destination Missoula is working with the University of Montana to help recruiting efforts by promoting Missoula as a place of great diversity of ideas, as a cultural haven in Montana and in the region, and as a welcoming and safe community for locals and visitors alike.

## SUSTAINABILITY

These travelers tend to be highly educated, mature, affluent, well-traveled, environmentally aware and sensitive to the social and cultural traditions, systems and mores of the destination they visit. They are similar to, and in many cases crossover with, the culinary traveler. Missoula is proud of the many sustainable initiatives that show our commitment to living our values. For example, Logjam Presents has implemented a Zero Waste policy at their venues with compostable cups, plates and cutlery and recycle cans with readily available bins. Missoula's community bus service, Mountain Line, introduced six zero-emissions electric buses to their fleet in the summer of 2019 and will be adding 6 more by spring of 2022, furthering their goal to have a zero-tailpipe-emissions fleet by 2035.

The Big Sky Documentary Film Festival is striving to be a Zero-Waste event by providing recycling and composting stations at all of their venues, limiting food vendors to those who provide recyclable and compostable silverware, promoting reuse by distributing reusable cups to guests and making the festival walking-friendly. In 2021, however, they went entirely virtual in response to the continued threat of COVID-19. The River City Roots Festival, though cancelled in 2020, has taken on similar goals in previous years providing compost and recycle stations, providing reusable cups in the place of single-use plastics and housing the events in a walkable zone. Both the City of Missoula and Missoula County have also recently committed an initiative for 100% clean electricity by 2030.

## BIRDING

It is estimated that approximately 45 million people in the U.S. are bird-watchers. According to an analysis done by The American Birding Expo, birders in the U.S. spend approximately \$14.8 billion on travel-related expenses, and the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service states that the higher the income and education level, the more likely a person is to be a birder. According to a 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation produced by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, birders contribute more than \$75 billion to the U.S. economy. A 2011 survey showed that bird-watchers spend nearly \$41 billion annually on trips and equipment and that local economies benefit from the \$14.9 billion bird-watchers spend on food, lodging and transportation. U.S. bird-watchers are usually highly educated, affluent, slightly more women (56%), usually travel solo or with a partner, but not large groups, and, although made up of all age groups, middle-aged and elderly people represent the largest group (40 – 70). They usually will spend 13 –14 days birding away from home.

Situated along pristine rivers offering exceptional riparian zones, Missoula and the Bitterroot Valley are brimming with numerous habitats and a wide variety of bird species. Both areas are havens for bird-watchers. Three of the best known spots in the area are Kelly Island, a 650-acre conservation area comprised of six islands at the confluence of the Bitterroot and Clark Fork rivers; Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge, a 2,700-acre refuge with more than 225 identified species; and the 1,200-acre Teller Wildlife Refuge.

## HISTORY AND CULTURE

Missoula proudly lives our history. Evidence of the prehistoric ice age floods and Glacial Lake Missoula are still etched on the mountains surrounding Missoula. The indigenous peoples of the Missoula Valley were members of the Salish Tribes. Over the centuries, Salish, Kootenai, Pend d'Oreille, Nez Perce, Gros Ventre and the Blackfoot Tribes used the Missoula Valley as a travel route to the eastern plains and buffalo. They called the area "Nemissoolatakoo," from which "Missoula" is derived. The word translates roughly to "river of ambush/surprise," a reflection of the inter-tribal fighting common to the area. Their first encounter with non-natives came in 1805, when the Lewis and Clark expedition passed through the Missoula Valley. Missoula and the surrounding five valleys' rich history comes alive in places like Travelers' Rest State Park and the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula. Missoula is full of ways to become immersed in the history and culture - from historic downtown tours, river walks and tours of the Missoula Smokejumper's Center to walking portions of the Lewis and Clark trail, enjoying traditional pow wows and sharing meals from the many diverse cultures that have since made this special place home. The Downtown Missoula Partnership, partnered with Historical Research Associates, the city's Historic Preservation Commission, and the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula and produced a vision for a comprehensive heritage program in downtown Missoula, including both banks of the Clark Fork River. There are few, if any, communities the size of Missoula that have developed a defined heritage interpretive plan, and it could act as a prototype for other Montana towns to use. The Montana Natural History Center serves as a fantastic spot to learn about the biodiversity of Western Montana, including full-scale replicas and mounts of local animals like bears, mountain lions and ungulate species. Visitors can learn about the history, legacy and modern traditions of the American Indian tribes who call this area their ancestral home at places like the Payne Family Native American Center, which is the site of a historic Salish Indian encampment, the Native American Studies building on the University of Montana campus and the 3 Chiefs Culture Center and Museum north of town.

**Optional: Include attachments here.**

*c. What research supports your target marketing?*

## SUPPORTING RESEARCH

Research on each of the existing and emerging markets for Missoula is available from the following sources:

- Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development – General Travel Statistics
- STR Reports – Missoula-Specific Hotel Statistics and competitive market analysis
- U.S. Travel Association – 2020 Forecast (<https://www.ustravel.org/research/travel-forecasts> and Answer Sheet – (<https://www.ustravel.org/answersheet>)
- Destination Analysts - (<http://destinationsanalysts.com/insights-updates/>)
- Longwoods International Travel Sentiment Surveys and Research - (<https://longwoods-intl.com/covid-19>)
- Trekkssoft - <https://www.trekkssoft.com/en/resources/ebooks/travel-trends-report-2020>)
- Cision - 2021 State of the Media Report - (<https://www.cision.com/resources/research-reports/2021-state-of-the-media/>)
- Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research - 2019 Economic Impact
- Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research - 2019 Nonresident Traveler Expenditures & Economic Contribution in Missoula County
- Canadian Government Travel Statistics (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/start-debut-eng.html>)
- U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Travel & Tourism Industries – Canadian Travel Statistics ([http://travel.trade.gov/outreachpages/inbound.general\\_information.inbound\\_overview.html](http://travel.trade.gov/outreachpages/inbound.general_information.inbound_overview.html))
- University of Minnesota Tourism Research Reports – Sustainable Tourism (<http://www.tourism.umn.edu/ResearchReports/MarketSegments/Sustainable>)
- Hoteliers – Hotel, Travel & Hospitality News – Report: More Affluent Travelers, More Women Setting Travel Trends (<http://www.4hoteliers.com/features/article/8196>)
- GutsyTraveler.com – Women Travel Statistics – 80% of All Travel Decisions Made by Women (<http://gutsytraveler.com/women-travel-statistics>)
- National Association of Sports Commissions – 2017 Sports Tourism: A State of the Industry Report ([www.sportscommissions.org](http://www.sportscommissions.org))
- Sports Tourism: Sleeping Giant of the Tourism Market, Lavonne Wittmann
- Forbes. Com - Youth Sports Tourism Keeps Booming, But How Deep Do Its Dollars Go In Communities (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/bobcook/2017/08/25/youth-sports-tourism-keeps-booming-but-how-deep-do-its-dollars-go-in-communities/#5e2a2d3755d4>)
- HospitalityNet.com - Will the Hospitality and Travel Industry Recover in 2021? (<https://www.hospitalitynet.org/opinion/4103064.html>)
- Skift.Com - The New Era of Food Tourism Trends and Best Practices for Stakeholders ([research.skift.com/reports/the-new-era-of-food-tourism-trends-and-best-practices-for-stakeholders/](https://research.skift.com/reports/the-new-era-of-food-tourism-trends-and-best-practices-for-stakeholders/))
- U.S. Travel – Comprehensive Culinary Travel Survey Provides Insights on Food and Wine Travelers (<http://www.ustravel.org/news/press-releases/comprehensive-culinary-travel-survey-provides-insightsfood-and-wine-travelers>)
- Skift – Megatrends Defining Travel in 2019 and 2020, Yearbook/Issue:01
- About Tourism – Destination Marketing and the "FOOD" Element: A Market Overview (<https://abouttourism.wordpress.com/tag/culinary-tourism>)
- Kaplan University – Mapping the Study of Motorcycle Tourism ([www.kaplanuniversity.edu](http://www.kaplanuniversity.edu))

- Motorcycle Tourism – Motorcyclists the PURE Tourist (<http://www.slideshare.net/alig8r/motorcycle-tourism>)
- ITRR - Motorcycle Touring in Montana: A Market Analysis
- USA Today – Women Help Rev Up Motorcycle Industry (<https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/business/2017/09/01/women-help-rev-up-motorcycle-industry/573631001/>)
- CMI Community Marketing & Insights – 23rd Annual LGBT Tourism and Hospitality Survey (<http://www.communitymarketinginc.com>)
- Travel Weekly – Music Tourism Has Potential, But Industry Must Pick Up The Tempo – <http://www.travelweekly.com/north-America-Travel/Music-tourism-has-potential-but-industry-must-pick-up-the-tempo>
- Cision PR Newswire <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/global-culinary-tourism-market-2020-to-2027---by-activity-type-age-group-and-mode-of-booking-301106550.html>

## GOALS

- Support Missoula's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic while continuing to promote safety guidelines for visitors, locals, businesses and organizations.
- Increase the demand in Missoula for hotel rooms, attraction visits, concert and festival attendees, package tours, retail sales, restaurant receipts, local transportation and other events and activities that positively affect the economic impact of the local tourism industry.
- Boost the demand for and usage of venues in Missoula for groups and special events that, in turn, draw attendees to stay overnight in Missoula hotels.
- Via the Missoula Sports Committee and direct sales efforts, recruit, grow and retain sports events in the Missoula area and continue to expand visibility of Missoula as a premier athletic destination, especially in the youth sports market.
- Gain national and international media exposure for Missoula's diverse attractions, natural environment, rich history and unique personality to further educate and facilitate understanding of the Missoula product.
- Support and contribute to the enrichment of Missoula's multicultural, performing and visual arts, historic, recreation, education, sports, business and entertainment communities.
- Welcome all visitors, regardless of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, color, national origin, religion, marital status, veteran status or disability.
- Through strong community outreach and with recognized expertise in the tourism industry, actively participate in and contribute to the overall strategic planning for the growth and sustainability of the tourism industry in Missoula.
- To educate and bring awareness to the community of the importance of tourism to Missoula's economic health and the preservation of its residents' lifestyle.
- Actively seek cooperative community partners to assist Destination Missoula and the Missoula Tourism Business Improvement District in meeting the above goals.

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

Destination Missoula strongly believes in the value of co-op opportunities with partners in the industry. Many times it is a way to reach markets with a larger message and presence than Destination Missoula can individually. The types of co-ops that Destination Missoula would like to participate in alongside the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development are:

- Affordable print and digital advertising that includes reader service
- Matching funds programs that hit our target markets
- Shoulder season, outdoor, non-winter specific
- Arts and culture
- Entertainment
- Two Nations
- Mountain bike travel
- International

**Optional: Include attachment here.**

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

Destination Missoula also would like to participate in cooperative programs with Glacier Country Tourism and the other Regions and CVBs across the state with the following themes in mind:

- Park-to-park travel
- Arts and culture travel
- Canadian and international travel

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

Participating in joint ventures is a good way for Destination Missoula to stretch marketing dollars. It is a good use of our resources when opportunities are offered that fit in with our marketing initiatives. In FY 19-20 we participated in Parents Magazine, Sojern and Trip Advisor.

- Sojern
  - Purchased Impressions: 869,566
  - Delivered: 922,662
  - Clicks: 1,553
  - CTR: .17%
- Leisure Travel
  - The online itinerary and video promotion received 35,894 impressions and 25 clicks.
- Parents Magazine
  - \$3,398
  - Audience: 2,000,000
  - 849 Call Center Inquiries
  - 311 Web Inquiries

If the same opportunities present themselves, we would participate in everything again with the exception of Parents Magazine.

**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
		Destination Missoula will place print advertising in a variety of publications and will place online digital ads targeting diverse geographic and	Destination Analysts   <a href="https://www.destinationanalysts.com/insights-updates/">https://www.destinationanalysts.com/insights-updates/</a> Print usage in travel planning has risen close to 50% of American leisure travelers and the use of DMO print visitor guides has risen to just over 20%. While this rise may not signal any longer term trend there is clearly no evidence of a long-term decline in print or DMO guide usage. According to the State of the American Traveler, an independent research report by Miles Partnership, print has consistently shown strength and even slow growth in print usage over the last five years. 24.4% of travelers rely on offline media including TV, printed newspapers, magazines, etc. for travel inspiration. Miles Partnership   <a href="https://www.milespartnership.com/state-american-traveler">https://www.milespartnership.com/state-american-traveler</a> The State of the American Traveler, Destination Analysts	Print ads will be measured through unique URL and call center responses. Destination Missoula's overall target is to acquire 5% inquiry growth over prior-year total inquiries and web visitation numbers via			

Consumer	Print Advertising	demographic markets showing what is unique about the Missoula area with an emphasis on off-peak and shoulder seasons.	Despite 72%+ of Millennials using smartphones in trip planning (vs. only 26% of Baby Boomers) they are just as likely to use print overall, almost as likely as Baby Boomers to order an official print guide and more likely to visit a DMO website. Multimedia—indeed, "Masses of Media"—is critical for reaching and engaging with younger US travelers. State of the American Traveler, Miles Partnership  MPA The Association of Magazine Media   <a href="https://www.magazine.org/">https://www.magazine.org/</a> <a href="https://www.magazine.org/five-year-review?hkey=e862a7c7-e687-429e-84a4-9835f29b2ca8">https://www.magazine.org/five-year-review?hkey=e862a7c7-e687-429e-84a4-9835f29b2ca8</a>	print and digital media placements. Individual digital display ads will aim to perform above a .10% CTR. National average is closer to .06% CTR.	\$48,740.40		
Consumer	Opportunity Marketing	The state of travel in our city, state and country are changing rapidly as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, more people get vaccinated, and the political and social climate evolves. While we lost many opportunities in 2020 due to shutdowns and restrictions, we are expecting new opportunities to arise as the world slowly opens back up.	For your ease of reference, the emerging markets and research is fully set out in the narrative of this marketing plan.	Destination Missoula will set aside funds to participate in marketing opportunities that come up throughout the year, and success measures will vary depending on the segment of the projects participated in.	\$10,000.00		
Consumer	Joint Ventures	Destination Missoula will set aside funds to continue participation in joint venture opportunities with the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development and Glacier Country Tourism and seek out opportunities with other CVBs/regions that come up throughout the year.	For your ease of reference, the emerging markets and research is fully set out in the narrative of this marketing plan.	Success measures will vary depending on the segment of the project participated in.	\$10,000.00		
Consumer	Search Engine Optimization	Destination Missoula will aggressively optimize and modify website source code meta tags to ensure best possible placement on major search engines and to promote organic SEO. Destination Missoula's overall goal is visitor growth to the website and related digital resources.	McCarthy Group <a href="https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c61c52811f78475c8a8a6c5/t/5c6c23f16e9a7f0b4e4ad353/1550590961706/millennial+survey.pdf">https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c61c52811f78475c8a8a6c5/t/5c6c23f16e9a7f0b4e4ad353/1550590961706/millennial+survey.pdf</a> When done well, SEO can provide an important — and cost-effective — strategy for organic growth. In fact, the latest research from web analytics company Parse.ly shows Google Search accounted for around half of external referrals to the publishers in its network this past year. January 2019  The reality is that SEO still matters in 2020, though many of the practices and methods have changed. For example, Google's 2019 BERT update lit a fire under SEO professionals to focus more on optimizing content based on search intent rather than keywords. Many businesses still need SEO, but they'll need to adapt to the shifting landscape.  Brand Authority And Reach: According to the McCarthy Group 2014 survey, 84% of the millennial respondents said they don't like advertising (and many of them don't trust it). It seems that many of this generation of buyers are becoming more resistant to traditional tactics like cold calling, email spam and even paid ads.  But with SEO, businesses can reach this demographic where they are already looking for brands — search engines. SEO works as a form of inbound marketing that attracts customers to you rather than interrupting their natural scrolling with pushy sales tactics.  Search Engine Land   <a href="https://searchengineland.com/search-engines-still-dominate-over-social-media-even-for-millennials-308135">https://searchengineland.com/search-engines-still-dominate-over-social-media-even-for-millennials-308135</a>  Search Engine Traffic   <a href="https://www.smartinsights.com/search-engine-marketing/search-engine-statistics/">https://www.smartinsights.com/search-engine-marketing/search-engine-statistics/</a>	Success will be measured for the websites by visitor and page views; SEO – visitors, search visitors, non-traditional web visitors, organic placement on Google and other search engines. This strategy ties into our website marketing, optimization and maintenance, and has the same 5% growth target via search and SEO strategies.	\$7,000.00		
Consumer	Electronic Adv - Newsletter, E-blast	Four targeted seasonal electronic email campaigns will remind previous website visitors to visit Missoula and to revisit the website for new content on the latest activities and attractions. Email mini-blasts will focus on major events and	Destination Analysts   <a href="https://www.destinationanalysts.com/insights-updates/">https://www.destinationanalysts.com/insights-updates/</a> 66.4% of travelers rely on the opinions of in-person and/or through direct contact (email, text, etc.) for travel inspiration.  Google   <a href="https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/feature/travel-customer-journey-in-2020">https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/feature/travel-customer-journey-in-2020</a>  Phocuswright   <a href="https://www.phocuswright.com/Free-Travel-Research">https://www.phocuswright.com/Free-Travel-Research</a>  "Brands can seize opportunities to personalize consumer experiences, even before they embark on a trip. With more travelers turning to digital for assistance, marketers can connect with customers when they first express intent through online inspiration or research. Travel companies can segment their audiences, combine first- and third-party data, and use machine learning to connect with customers. As traveler behavior continues to evolve, expectations will continue to rise. Navigating these changes can be challenging,	Success will be measured through open rates, click through rates, and bounce rates. Destination Missoula will focus on growing our overall open rate by 2% and the click-through rate from the email messaging by 5% during	\$21,000.00		

		happenings in Missoula to our loyal marketing database of contacts.	but digital provides more opportunities than ever for marketers to meet traveler intent and expectations at every turn. And that's a trip worth taking."	the marketing year.			
Consumer	Photo/Video Library	Destination Missoula will continue to develop and maintain its photo and video library used for all media. The goal with photography is to tell the story about the uniqueness of Missoula and the surrounding area with imagery that authentically speaks to the nature of this exceptional place. The photography used will draw visitors in by showcasing the natural beauty and the abundance of recreational opportunities, arts and culture, and food and drink options you would expect to find in a much larger city. Destination Missoula will purchase high-quality, all-season photographs and videos and will encourage non-professional photographers to submit their favorite area photo for potential use by Destination Missoula in marketing Missoula.	For your ease of reference, the emerging markets and research is fully set out in the narrative of this marketing plan. As per research conducted by MOTBD for the Montana brand, we have found that use of large, colorful and unique photography and video creates inspiration for visitors when they are making travel decisions. We use it across all platforms, including web, online, digital and print advertising, and throughout our social media.	Success will be measured by an addition of at least 50 new high quality photographs and one video to the library, and the ability of DM staff to easily catalogue and work with said photo/video. New and updated photos being used on the website will help to bolster the goal of 5% growth in searches.	\$10,000.00		
Consumer	Online/Digital Advertising	Destination Missoula will place online digital ads targeting diverse geographic and demographic group travel markets showing what is unique about the Missoula area with an emphasis on off-peak and shoulder seasons.	Scholarworks   <a href="https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2238&amp;context=ttra">https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2238&amp;context=ttra</a> Hubspot   <a href="https://blog.hubspot.com/">https://blog.hubspot.com/</a> <a href="https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/state-of-video-marketing-new-data">https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/state-of-video-marketing-new-data</a> 97% of marketers claim that videos help customers understand products. Cisco   <a href="https://www.cisco.com/c/dam/m/en_us/solutions/service-provider/vni-forecast-highlights/pdf/Global_2021_Forecast_Highlights.pdf">https://www.cisco.com/c/dam/m/en_us/solutions/service-provider/vni-forecast-highlights/pdf/Global_2021_Forecast_Highlights.pdf</a> <a href="https://techblog.comsoc.org/2017/06/10/cisco-increased-use-of-web-video-to-be-82-of-all-internet-traffic-by-2021/">https://techblog.comsoc.org/2017/06/10/cisco-increased-use-of-web-video-to-be-82-of-all-internet-traffic-by-2021/</a> Over 80% of all traffic will consist of video by 2021 Live video will account for 13 % of traffic by 2021 Social Media Today   <a href="https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/the-state-of-video-marketing-in-2018-infographic/518339/">https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/the-state-of-video-marketing-in-2018-infographic/518339/</a> 90% of consumers claim a video will help them make a purchasing decision.	Success for online digital ads will be measured through click through rates and impressions. Individual digital display ads will aim to perform above a .10% CTR. National average is closer to .06% CTR.	\$17,000.00		
Marketing Support	Administration	Funding for operations, key personnel and services is necessary in order to provide the best experience for visitors to the Missoula community, and highly trained staff that is knowledgeable on industry trends and how to implement them to the advantage of the Missoula market.	For your ease of reference, the emerging markets and research is fully set out in the narrative of this marketing plan.	Success will be measured by meeting our objective to spend less than 20% of the total marketing budget.	\$59,587.60		
				Success will be measured by			



Marketing Support	DMO Program Participation	<p>Staff attendance at Destinations International's niche and annual conferences will keep staff abreast of industry trends and how to incorporate them in our market.</p>	<p>Aside from the courses and trainings offered, belonging to DI offers a plethora of resources that were acquired and utilized by Destination Missoula in FY20: email newsletters; targeted listservs on DMO issues, especially pertaining to COVID; and examples of job descriptions and various reporting forms shared by DMO peers.</p>	<p>participation in the organization, attendance at conferences, training and acquisition of industry materials, information and access to resources provided by membership in Destinations International organization.</p>	\$7,900.00		
		<p>Destination Missoula will provide the following services through our fulfillment company:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide potential visitors with information they have requested five days a week (24/7 ordering capabilities provided), including expanded hours for peak inquiry periods and large-scale campaigns.</li> <li>• Execute a central clearing house for management, fulfillment and tracking of all inquiries via email, telephone, LiveChat, fax, mail and reader response cards.</li> <li>• Provide targeted extension numbers for better tracking of print media, as well as special URLs for web response measurement. Destination Missoula has also boosted capabilities to provide additional website tracking of visitors who order visitor guides to help provide even more tracking about where inquiries are coming from.</li> <li>• Provide a customizable database to track additional traveler interest</li> </ul>					

Marketing Support	Fulfillment/Telemarketing/Call Center	<p>and preferences. This system also gives us the information to provide follow up with consumers, if necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide timely fulfillment of travel guides and electronic mail responses.</li> <li>• Provide additional travel planning assistance to visitors needing help with directions, weather conditions and attraction and lodging details.</li> <li>• Maintain quality data in the consumer database and backup the data daily for protection.</li> <li>• Provide storage for local and national distribution of the guides via call center and local tourism business requests for guides.</li> <li>• Integrate call center with web 2.0 opportunities to place questions and answers and other valuable dialog with consumers online to assist website-based travel planners.</li> <li>• Provide social media content support and tracking information— Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest. A major share of the travel guides will come into and be distributed by the call center/fulfillment center. More than 60,000 travel guides will</li> </ul>	<p>Destination Analysts   <a href="https://www.destinationanalysts.com/insights-updates/">https://www.destinationanalysts.com/insights-updates/</a>          66.4% of travelers rely on the opinions of in-person and/or through direct contact (calls, live chat, email, text, etc.) for travel inspiration.</p>	<p>Destination Missoula's overall goal is to improve by 5% the number of inquiries handled at the call center. Success will be measured by the number of inquiries received compared to prior year.</p>	<p>\$56,856.00</p>		
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		<p>be sent from the call center to direct inquiries from print, digital, social media and related travel guide requests. The call center will ship the travel guides using the latest requirements with the U.S. Postal Service. They will ship guides to the United States and Canada, but will restrict guides requested outside those areas to only special mailing circumstances approved by the director. In those cases, Destination Missoula pushes visitors, when possible, to the online guide version</p>					
Marketing Support	Crisis Management	<p>Destination Missoula will actively participate with the Tourism Advisory Council, Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development, Glacier Country Tourism and other tourism organizations in educational programs and crisis management issues related to the promotion of tourism.</p>	<p>For your ease of reference, the emerging markets and research is fully set out in the narrative of this marketing plan. The ability to respond quickly to a crisis is of utmost importance. Having a local, regional and state crisis management policy in place and being able to put resources forward immediately to help manage our message, move visitors safely throughout our state and give them up to date information and alternatives has proven to be essential.</p>	<p>Success measurements will vary greatly based on the crisis. Destination Missoula will be proactive in helping to resolve the crisis, will maintain an updated crisis communication plan to meet all needs, will provide rapid communication via the call center, social media, website and with the media.</p>	\$100.00		
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	<p>Destination Missoula will set aside funds for key personnel to attend TAC meetings and the annual Governor's Conference on Tourism &amp; Recreation in order to stay abreast of industry rules, regulations and trends. Success will be measured by meeting and conference attendance and incorporation of new rules, regulations and trends in daily operations of Destination Missoula.</p>	<p>For your ease of reference, the emerging markets and research is fully set out in the narrative of this marketing plan</p>	<p>Success will be measured by meeting and conference attendance and incorporation of new rules, regulations and trends in daily operations of Destination Missoula.</p>	\$2,000.00		
		<p>Due to COVID-19 there</p>					

are still decisions being made around staffing for the Visitor Information Center. Traditionally, Destination Missoula has maintained a full-time, year-round travel counselor for our VIC during regular office hours. In lieu of a full-time travel counselor, this year we have two seasonal staff members covering regular business hours as well as extended summer hours whose responsibilities may include but are not limited to:

- Responding to tourism inquiries in person, via phone, email, fax and letter.
- Compiling and inputting data into the computer regarding information on visitation, calendar of events, local hotels and other related tourism businesses. Destination Missoula will use a professional CRM system to track this information.
- Making lists of businesses to contact about tourism concerns.
- Researching information for guests. Ordering, storing and stocking brochures and maps from attractions, hotels, and other tourism-related businesses. Destination Missoula will use a professional CRM system to inventory and track our brochure usage.
- Maintaining the VIC area.

Marketing Support	VIC Funding/Staffing/Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conceiving and developing area-wide tours and support materials for tours.</li> <li>• Serving as support staff for the Montana visitor information website.</li> <li>• Maintaining VIC scheduling.</li> <li>• Producing training and other familiarization activities with all the attractions in the area for frontline staff in order to give the visitor a more personal and knowledgeable view of what Missoula has to offer.</li> <li>• Maintaining a thorough knowledge of the content of all Montana guides and brochures, which the VIC has in its racks, and area-wide special events in order to intelligently converse with visitors of all ages. VIC staff should know road conditions, any construction areas and suggested alternate routes. Staff should also be aware of alternative things to do in case of weather conditions. During the peak visitor season, DM extends the VIC hours past the office hours of 9am-5pm Monday through Friday. Staff will assist visitors for two hours after the administrative office closing time, Monday through Friday, and for eight</li> </ul> <p>Destination Analysts   <a href="https://www.destinationanalysts.com/insights-updates/">https://www.destinationanalysts.com/insights-updates/</a> 66.4% of travelers rely on the opinions of in-person and/or through direct contact (email, text, etc.) for travel inspiration.</p>	Success will be measured by staffing the visitor center including extended hours during peak season.	\$38,404.00		
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hours Saturday and five hours Sunday, from July 1 through Labor Day weekend, and Memorial Day through June 30, 2022.

- Keeping statistics about how many visitors requested information and home states of visitors.
- Keeping track of the number of bulk requests filled.
- Packaging visitor packets for bulk requests from conventions, meetings and other groups. These hours are not covered by the Destination Missoula regular staff. Destination Missoula wants to be sure visitors feel welcome and know what is available to them, even if they arrive outside our regular hours.

Destination Missoula continues to partner with the Missoula Montana Airport with a visitor information center at the airport. This VIC services thousands of visitors annually. Destination Missoula has created highly visible signage for the outside of our main visitor center, and signage within the visitor center to help direct visitors to the information they are looking for.

Destination Missoula uses Simpleview software. This enables the Visitor Services staff to track visitors with greater accuracy and

Success will be measured by the increase in accuracy and detailed reporting of travelers visiting the Visitor Center. We'll be able to use the data to further focus our

Marketing Support	Digital Asset Management/Aquisition	<p>generate much more detailed visitor reports. The software creates a simple form that visitors can type their information into on an iPad. The information is automatically inputted into the database, thereby saving staff time with data entry. The Simpleview software also has an inventory module, so staff can track brochures and guides and know when to order more</p>	<p>Personal interaction with travel counselors increases the ability to tailor a visitor's experience, give them many options of what to see and do in a community that they would not otherwise have known about, and hopefully increases the length of their stay.</p> <p>Destination Analysts   <a href="https://www.destinationanalysts.com/insights-updates/">https://www.destinationanalysts.com/insights-updates/</a> 66.4% of travelers rely on the opinions of in-person and/or through direct contact (email, text, etc.) for travel inspiration.</p>	<p>marketing efforts as well. We will track the number of visitors to the Visitor Information Center, the # in the party and where they are from. The Simpleview inventory module streamlines the inventory we have in stock for visitors, including visitor guides and brochures. We will use the data from the reports for this as well as have all contacts to order additional guides and brochures in one easy-to-use system.</p>	\$2,250.00		
Publicity	Press Promotions/Media Outreach	<p>Destination Missoula and the Missoula Tourism Business Improvement District have contracted and partnered with Windfall for public relations services. These services include production of a media/press kit to include interchangeable information on sports, group travel, events and conference planning, press releases and story pitches to appropriate publications in drive and direct flight markets. These storylines are directed to appropriate writers and publications to bolster paid media endeavors and meet the goal of driving shoulder season business.</p> <p>Our digital influencer recruitment strategy will be boosted by the use of Cision for prospecting, social media planning and earned media tracking.</p>	<p>Outsell Inc.   <a href="https://outsellinc.com">outsellinc.com</a> The study The Earned Media Opportunity, includes findings from Outsell's 2016 survey of over 1500 senior marketers, as well as interviews with CMOs.</p> <p>"The study found that rebalancing the marketing mix to deploy more resources toward earned media in combination with paid and owned channels delivers dramatically higher impact. This is demonstrated at PR Newswire, where our use of earned media programs integrated with paid and owned channels have resulted in five times more downloads of our content, and a 40 percent increase in our conversion rate."</p> <p>Audiences view earned media as the most authentic and trustworthy form of marketing; Earned media was rated as "More" or "As Effective" as paid media by 81% of small firm marketers vs. 73% at large firms.</p> <p>Ogilvy   <a href="https://www.adweek.com/performance-marketing/study-earned-media-still-matters-a-lot/">https://www.adweek.com/performance-marketing/study-earned-media-still-matters-a-lot/</a> In fact, the survey reveals that earned media is still, by leaps and bounds, the most powerful resource for influencing purchasing decisions and business outcomes.</p> <p>According to the study, traditional media outlets are still the most trusted sources of news, followed by influencer-driven news. News generated by companies themselves, however, ranked as the least influential. Further, The majority of journalists surveyed (65%) agree that the more the (traditional) media covers a brand, the more credible the brand appears (within reason, of course; they also cautioned that too much coverage looks suspicious).</p> <p>Some other key takeaways from the study include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 44% of respondents feel that today's campaigns require a combination of traditional, social and paid media.</li> <li>• Almost half of respondents (47%) consider earned media the most influential medium of all when it comes to view earned media as most influential medium for driving purchasing decisions and business outcomes.</li> </ul>	<p>Success will be measured by participation/engagement rate and amount of earned media tracked by Cision (media management tool). Bed Tax will pay for Cision, while the TBID will pay for costs associated with FAMS, travel writers, etc.</p>	\$7,000.00		
		<p>In order to track Missoula's occupancy rates and understand the results of key marketing campaigns, including advertising and event promotion, and our conversion rates, Destination Missoula will use the following tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DM will continue to purchase appropriate STR reporting in order to track Missoula city occupancy rates, average daily rates,</li> </ul>					

Research	Contracted Services	<p>averages and changes in the Missoula hotel market. This will aid DM in understanding the Missoula market, to identify times of need, and to develop niche marketing opportunities to increase occupancy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DM will work with major event and conference planners, organizations and individuals to establish the economic impact of such events and conferences during 2021-2022 through the Destinations International Economic Impact Calculator. During 2019 – 20 DM was able to establish over \$724,000 in economic impact from 6 funded events throughout the year. Missoula will also be creating a new, updated campaign to bring awareness to the community of the impact of such events on the community.</li> <li>DM will continue with its implementation of web trends and survey tools to measure inquiries, actual visitations, visitor satisfaction and feedback in order to identify marketing successes, areas needing improvement or misperceptions about Missoula and the surrounding area, and to raise community awareness of</li> </ul>	<p>For your ease of reference, the emerging markets and research is fully set out in the narrative of this marketing plan. Our use of STR Reports is an essential tool to assess our market growth from both the leisure and group market standpoints and provide us with benchmarks for our planning process for the following year. It also allows us to give firm statistics of the value of a DMO in a community. We do not feel that we have adequate visitor information at the city level, as our ITRR information for Missoula is very old. We will therefore be commissioning a research company to help Missoula adequately assess our visitors and provide us with the in-depth knowledge that we need to be specific in our target marketing. We will also begin a tourism master planning process this year.</p>	<p>Success will be measured by awareness of industry and specific community trends, ability to specifically define and increase target markets, and conversion rates.</p>	<p>\$100.00</p>	
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		<p>tourism as an economic driver.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DM and the Missoula TBID will initiate a Tourism Master Plan for Missoula. The initial months of the planning process will encompass extensive research on Missoula visitors and the perception of tourism's impact on the community and its resources. This research will be specific to Missoula and the surrounding areas and provide up-to-date information on visitors to the community. It will also help Destination Missoula to evaluate its current messaging and align it with the most effective geographic and demographic targets.</li> </ul>					
							\$297,938.00

**Marketing Method Budget**

Marketing Segment	Marketing Method	Bed tax funded budget
Consumer	Print Advertising	\$48,740.40
Consumer	Opportunity Marketing	\$10,000.00
Consumer	Joint Ventures	\$10,000.00
Consumer	Search Engine Optimization	\$7,000.00
Consumer	Electronic Adv - Newsletter, E-blast	\$21,000.00
Consumer	Photo/Video Library	\$10,000.00
Consumer	Online/Digital Advertising	\$17,000.00
		\$123,740.40
Marketing Support	Administration	\$59,587.60
Marketing Support	DMO Program Participation	\$7,900.00
Marketing Support	Fulfillment/Telemarketing/Call Center	\$56,856.00
Marketing Support	Crisis Management	\$100.00
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	\$2,000.00
Marketing Support	VIC Funding/Staffing/Signage	\$38,404.00
Marketing Support	Digital Asset Management/Aquisition	\$2,250.00

		\$167,097.60
Publicity	Press Promotions/Media Outreach	\$7,000.00
		\$7,000.00
Research	Contracted Services	\$100.00
		\$100.00
		\$297,938.00

**Miscellaneous Attachments**

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Description	File Name	File Size
Bed Tax Pie Chart by Segment & Method	Bed Tax Pie Chart by Method.pdf	19 KB
Combined Funding Pie Chart	DM Combined Funding Pie Chart.pdf	12 KB
Destination Missoula FY 21-22 Marketing Plan	DM_2021-22 Marketing Plan_050421 With Combined Funding Pie Chart.pdf	41.4 MB
Bed Tax Pie Chart	Pie Chart.docx	43 KB

**Reg/CVB Required Documents**

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Description	File Name	File Size
Required Documents Signed	Required Documents Signed.pdf	6.6 MB

