



Application

55917 - FY18 Region/CVB Marketing Plan - Final Application

58854 - FY18 Red Lodge CVB Marketing Plan

DOC Office of Tourism

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Community & Brand Support

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

Nestled in Montana's magnificent Beartooth Mountains and surrounded by Custer Gallatin National Forest, Red Lodge delivers world-class outdoor recreation and access to Yellowstone National Park via the world-renowned Beartooth Highway. In our historic downtown, you'll enjoy locally owned shops, quality restaurants and plenty of first class accommodations and entertainment. No matter what the season, Red Lodge is your Base Camp to the Beartooths.

The Red Lodge visitor arrives here looking forward to its natural beauty and quaint charm. What they discover is its magic. And for that, they return again and again, over a lifetime. Like so much of Montana, Red Lodge is surrounded by natural splendor – Montana's highest peaks frame our back yards, its crystal-clear waterways tumble down our valleys, and that unique combination of pine and aspen scents invigorate our air. But as the Red

Lodge visitor knows, we have something special going on here; we're just far enough off the beaten path that locals truly appreciate visitors, we want to say Hello when we see someone new in town, and we do not just throw out the welcome mat for you, we show you why we love living here.

Today's travelers are looking for that kind of experience, and it's one Red Lodge excels at delivering. A year-round population of just over 2,000 and an historic Main Street business district with great restaurants, shopping, entertainment, and accommodations means a stay in Red Lodge is an opportunity to make friends with locals.

Red Lodge, Montana 2016 Gateway Community of the Year, anchors the most scenic route into Yellowstone National Park: the 68-mile alpine and structural wonder of the Beartooth Highway, an "All-American Road". Open late May-October, visitors come from around the world to experience its summer snowfields, high-mountain vistas, and legendary curves.

Sitting on the edge of a National Forest, Red Lodge lays claim to more than 3.6 million acres of uninterrupted and unspoiled wild country as our "back yard." Much of that is easily accessible with well-marked trails for hikers, horseback riders, and many near town are even open to bicyclists. Whatever the day's adventures entail, Red Lodge is the perfect Base Camp to the Beartooths.

Red Lodge is easily accessed from Interstate I-90 via State Hwy 212 from Laurel and Hwy 78 from Columbus. It is a one hour drive from Logan International Airport in Billings which is served by four major Airlines, United, Delta, Alaska and now American Airlines direct from Dallas. We are also seeing an increase in travelers from the Bozeman Yellowstone airport - 2 1/2 hours - with flights provided by United, Delta, Alaska and American direct flights from Dallas as well as Cody's airport which is served by United and Delta.

OUR STRENGTHS:

Gateway to Yellowstone National Park

The Most Scenic Route to Yellowstone Park, over the Beartooth Highway

The Beartooth Highway

Dubbed "the most beautiful roadway in America" by On the Road correspondent Charles Kuralt, the Beartooth Highway climbs to an astounding 10,947 feet above sea level. As it winds its way from Red Lodge to Yellowstone National Park, the Highway traverses an impressive range of ecosystems and geological wonders. At the highway's summit, travelers find themselves in a sky-high world of glacial cirques, clear alpine lakes, and snow that lingers through the summer months.

Gateway to the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness

Our back yard consists of millions of acres of high country wilderness. As early as 1897, trails began snaking their way up the West Fork canyon, cleared by hand with saws and pickaxes. Today those same trails can take you to pristine country where visitors can enjoy a variety of outdoor activities.

Great Shops and Restaurants

Charming historic downtown with locally owned stores run by helpful, knowledgeable staff. Pop into one of the many restaurants for a quick burger and a locally brewed beer, or experience fine dining featuring wild game and more. Relax and listen to some great music from our many local musicians or attend a first run movie at the historic Roman Theater.

Year-round Skiing

Red Lodge Mountain - During the winter months, bountiful snow and shimmering blue skies make for great fun on the slopes. Open from mid-November through mid-April.

Beartooth Pass – During the summer months, the beartooth Highway is your chair lift to acres of open terrain for skiing and snowboarding. For those that are not much interested in hiking there is beartooth basin with two permanent poma lifts for skier access to the Twin Lakes headwall.

Arts and Culture

Catch the spirit of today at one of the many art and photographic galleries in town or experience various styles of art at the Carbon County Arts Guild & Depot Gallery and the Red Lodge Clay Center. For history enthusiasts, Red Lodge is home to the Carbon County Historical Society and Museum where visitors can learn about the colorful history of Red Lodge and surrounding areas.

Events and Attractions

Red Lodge is home to many events and year-round attractions. Yellowstone Wildlife Sanctuary – Home of Champions Rodeo - Beartooth Rally - Winter Carnival - National Finals Ski-Joring – Christmas Stroll – Fun Run - Iron Horse Motorcycle Rodeo - Red Lodge Songwriter Festival – Bearcreek Downs Pig Races – Beartooth Run - Peaks to Prairie Adventure Race and many more.

Proximity to Billings

Billings is the largest city in Montana with a population of over 100,000 and a major transportation hub for South Central Montana. Travelers can reach Billings by air, by bus or car on two east and west and north and south Interstates highways. Billings Logan International Airport is served by four major airlines United, Delta, Alaska, and American.

Amenities

Red Lodge may seem like a remote destination to some visitors, but they will be pleased to find much of the technologies, amenities and comforts as they have at home, more than adequate cell phone coverage and broadband internet in most areas.

OPPORTUNITIES:

Motorcycle/Auto Groups

The Beartooth Highway was recently voted the *Number 1 Motorcycling Road in America* by the American Motorcyclist Association.

Small Groups

Red Lodge is the perfect destination for small groups. RV clubs, executive retreats, conventions of 100 people or less, craft clubs, all find the comfortable meeting spaces and hospitality of Red Lodge a great place to spur creativity, make new and renew old relationships.

Weddings/Reunions

Beautiful venues, quality lodging options and recreational possibilities of the surrounding area make Red Lodge the perfect setting to gather family and friends for your wedding or family reunion.

Tournaments/Community Events

The modern high school auditorium, as well as several other venues, provides the opportunity to house tournaments and larger community events.

Outdoor Competitions

Challenging and yet stunningly beautiful terrain attracts competitors from around the country to a multitude of outdoor events. These events include the Beartooth Run, in its 47th year, Peaks to Prairie Adventure Race, Nitty Gritty Bike Race, Collegiate Ski Races, National Ski Joring Championships among others.

Media Partnership Opportunities

Billings has a wide reach with television, radio and print media that we can better utilize with positive and timely press releases and promotional partnering. Quarterly, the Billings Gazette features what is going on in Red Lodge in its Explore editorial section. More can be done with KTVQ, KULR, YPR, and the print media options in Billings, Yellowstone Valley Women, and Magic Magazine, among others.

Annual Events

Red Lodge has a growing number of events, competitive, recreational and cultural. The majority of these events take place during the summer months but also winter events attract visitors from in state and out of state locations. Alpine Ski Races, National Ski Joring Championships, Winter Carnival. Summertime: Red Lodge Music Festival, Red Lodge Songwriter Festival, Fourth of July Rodeo and Parade, Beartooth Basin Summer Ski Area, Beartooth Bike Rally, Cruisen Red Lodge Vintage Car Show, Labor Day Fun Run just to name a few.

CHALLENGES:

Making Red Lodge a Destination

Red Lodge is used as a 'Pass Thru' for the Beartooth Highway and Yellowstone Park in the Summer and the town that sits at the base of Red Lodge

Mountain during winter months. If we can influence a small percentage of summer travelers to stay one additional night in Red Lodge and enjoy all the offering of our town and surrounding area, it will make a significant impact on our local economy. In the winter months we need to reinforce Red Lodge as a winter destination to skiers and non-skiers alike. First class restaurants, comfortable accommodations, great shopping, restful relaxation, ice-skating, nordic skiing, wildlife viewing and hiking are a few of the winter time activities available in Red Lodge. We have a fabulous family oriented alpine ski area, Red Lodge Mountain.

Location and Way Finding Signage

Red Lodge is miles from a major highway. Montana Highway signs point Yellowstone Park travelers past Red Lodge exits or towards the Chief Joseph Highway in Wyoming.

Montana is Perceived as Challenging to Access

In addition to the state's destination attribute weaknesses, the Montana/Red Lodge brand brings with it this perceived challenge.

Beartooth Highway is Seasonal

Weather and snowplow funding often delay the opening of the Beartooth Highway in the spring. Snowstorms will temporarily close the road. Timely communication of the road status is challenging with reports of closures carrying a higher priority than reports of the Highway re-opening. The portion of the Highway located in Wyoming is a secondary priority for snowplows.

Make Winter Success Less Dependent on the Snow Conditions at Red Lodge Mountain

Red Lodge Mountain is the major draw for Red Lodge in the winter season. The town's commerce follows the quality of the snow conditions on the mountain. We can reduce the dips when snow conditions are not at their best by promoting all of the other amenities, events and winter time activities going on in Red Lodge. Hiking, cross country skiing, wildlife viewing, scenic drives, shopping, fine dining, relaxation in one of our great accommodations to name a few.

Online Mapping Services

Google Maps and others report inaccurate information for routes and business addresses.

Lack of City Marketing Support

While the City of Red Lodge collects a Resort Tax, the governing body offers no marketing or promotional funds for Red Lodge.

Perceived lack of comforts/technologies

Montana as a whole is perceived to be somewhat remote and lacking many of the amenities and technologies those travelers who may be less outdoor minded are looking for.

Perceived Costs and Time Requirements Inhibit Visitation to Montana

Research shows focus group and in-depth participants expressed serious concerns about the cost of a trip to Montana. Beyond the cost of traveling to Montana, many generally felt that a trip to Montana would require a significant investment of time.

COMPETITOR ANALYSIS:

Jackson Hole, WY

Popular tourism destination because of its proximity to Yellowstone & Grand Teton National Parks. Website, mobile, social media, and internet advertising resources.

Livingston, MT/Gardiner, MT

Way finding signage on I-90. Year-round entrance to Yellowstone Park.

Bozeman, MT / Big Sky, MT

Greater variety in lodging, dining and shopping opportunities, including groups, conventions and conferences. Proximity to Yellowstone Park. Four-season activities. Popular ski area. Cultural, historic, and educational activities, events, and attractions. Significantly greater marketing spend.

West Yellowstone, MT

West entrance to Yellowstone Park. The name West Yellowstone. More lodging and dining options. Significantly greater marketing spend.

Cody, WY

Eastern gateway to Yellowstone Park, access to 5 scenic byways including Chief Joseph Highway is a second route to Beartooth Highway and Northeast entrance. Lodging options, Buffalo Bill Museum, regional airport. By partnering with Wyoming Tourism has successfully marketed itself as “Yellowstone Country” and its airport “Yellowstone Airport.” Significantly more funding for promotion is directed to Cody by local, county and state monies.

Colorado

Travelers’ perceptions make Colorado Montana’s top competitor. In addition to awareness, demand, excitement for and visitation at significantly higher rates than Montana, research illuminated the directly competitive relationship Colorado represents. In discussing where to go in the West and Montana specifically, it was clear that most research participants viewed Colorado as the destination they would be heavily weighing Montana against, and a more persuasive one at that. These travelers felt Colorado had similar offerings on a basic level—spectacular natural beauty, abundance of outdoor recreation, outdoor culture, winter sports. Very importantly, Colorado’s cities, infrastructure and mature tourism product were seen as providing more of a “safety net,” something that was keenly on the minds of those who were less on the outdoor spectrum and/or less familiar with traveling in this region of the U.S.

MONTANA'S BRAND PILLARS:

The Montana Brand Pillars were seemingly written for Red Lodge.

Nestled in the Beartooth Mountains, with Yellowstone Park just up the road, the Beartooth Highway road, we truly offer more spectacular unspoiled nature than anywhere else in the lower 48.

A little off the beaten path Red Lodge, a historic mining town, is a vibrant and charming community that serves as a gateway to (many) natural wonders.

From art walks to downhill mountain bike rides, from reading a good book by the fire to skiing fresh powder, Red Lodge offers a wide range of activities in every season to offer breathtaking experiences by day, relaxing hospitality at night.

Optional: Include attachments here

How will your marketing plan address the three phases of the travel decision process of inspiration, orientation and facilitation?

The overall consumer-marketing goal is to expose our brand, “Base Camp to the Beartooths”, to potential visitors and invite them to stay a night or longer in Red Lodge. A strong social-media presence, online and print marketing via cooperative efforts with Yellowstone Country Travel Region, and the Red Lodge TBID provide inspiration. Once inspired, potential guests will be oriented appropriately via the Destination Red Lodge Travel Planner, RedLodge.com and staff produce enews. The CVB follows through to facilitate their stays once they arrive via front line staff of tourism partners and stakeholders and the Red Lodge Visitor Information Center staff and volunteers.

Our content will focus on the three core elements travelers are looking for when deciding on an outdoor destination such as Red Lodge are:

1. unique natural encounters without giving up modern comforts

2. comfortable isolation that attracts free-spirited adventurers,
3. a place for entirely new experiences and a place for new ways of experiencing the familiar.

Optional: Include attachments here.

a. Define your target markets (demographic, geographic and psycho-graphic)

The High Potential Visitor

This group is clearly a high-value audience; it is different from other travelers in important ways. Behaviorally and demographically, the survey shows that high potential Montana visitors have a remarkable and distinctive profile. This group of heavy travelers is not only attracted to Montana, they see the destination as more attractive and competitive when compared to its the regional competition. In brief, high potential Montana visitors are:

- City dwellers (i.e., not rural and not suburban)
- Married with children
- Well-educated, Affluent
- Younger
- Frequent travelers
- Male-oriented (54.3% male and 45.7% female)
- Strongly attracted to Montana's tourism offering
- Familiar with Montana's tourism offering
- Likely repeat visitors
- Outdoor-oriented travelers

High potential Montana visitors are also heavy consumers of recreational activities. This group is interested in a diverse array of Montana activities, centered around day hiking and visits to the National Parks.

Family travelers are a natural fit with Montana's travel product, including that available in the Eastern portion of the state. They are a large and lucrative segment. In the Montana Brand Exploration Survey, approximately one-third, 32.0 percent, of travelers reported having children under the age of 18 in their homes. Like high potential visitors, family travelers index high on outdoor psychographics, have high incomes and would expect to spend more and stay longer in the state than other travelers. Family travelers are interested in a variety of Red Lodge experiences, but their ideal trips would appear to center around the Yellowstone National Park, day hiking, horseback riding, and driving scenic byways. This niche market also expresses significant interest in child-friendly activities related to history, culture and geology.

Red Lodge offers affordable vacation opportunities to families visiting Montana for the first time or coming back on a repeat visit. 85% of visitors surveyed responded they will return to Montana within the next two years. These returning visitors are a significant target for our CVB.

Geotourism is defined as tourism that sustains or enhances the distinctive geographical character of a place—its environment, heritage, aesthetics, culture, and the well-being of its residents. Geotourists are high-value, low impact visitors who appreciate the unique characteristics, eccentricities and natural qualities of Red Lodge. They place high value on travel experiences that respect and support the local character of place, and are less likely to become discouraged in their travel experiences by travel distances/difficulties and vagaries of weather.

History Buffs

History buffs score higher on the psychographic index, have proven to have higher incomes and would spend more and stay longer compared to non-history buffs.

Our Traveler at a Glance

- Healthy, Active, Outdoor Enthusiasts
- Arts, Crafts, Entertainment Enthusiasts
- Motorcyclists and Auto Enthusiasts
- RV Enthusiasts
- Empty Nesters/Active Retirees
- Income: AHI of \$50,000+
- Education: Bachelor's Degree
- Age: 35-65

Core Geographic Markets

Red Lodge is located in the South Central portion of Montana. We are the gateway to the Northeast Entrance to Yellowstone Park via the Beartooth Highway. Because of our geographic location, the majority of visitors come from east of us.

Summer

Wyoming, Idaho, Colorado, Washington, and the Mid-Western States, particularly Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Winter

Wyoming, North Dakota, Minnesota and SK/MB Canada are key winter markets.

Key Psychographic Markets for Red Lodge.

- Social Class - middle to upper class (in terms of disposable income)
- Lifestyle - active, outdoor recreational oriented, frequent travelers
- Opinions - interested, but primarily influenced by desire to experience things for themselves
- Attitudes & Interests - outdoor activities, history & culture, foodies
- Attitudes & Beliefs - environmental conscious, has an adventurous spirit, likes nature
- Technology - savvy - using mobile devices in all stages of planning & travel

(ITRR 2016 Non-Resident Visitor Study) *

- Average Age - 55
- Age Groups –57% 55-64, 29% 65-74, 19% 45-54, 16% 35-44, 10% 25-34
- Gender - 65% Male, 35% Female
- Group Size - 38% Couple, 22% Self, 17% Immediate Family
- Average Group Size - 2.85
- Household Income – 13% Less than \$50k, 14% \$75-\$100k, 28% \$50-\$75k, 39% \$100-\$150k

*All percentages taken from online ITRR reports with 63 respondents

The following **ITTR** data outlines what visitors are doing while in our area.

- Scenic Driving - 65%
- Day Hiking - 51%
- Wildlife Watching - 49%
- Nature Photography - 48%
- Recreational Shopping - - 32%
- Car/RV camping - 30%
- Visiting Historical Sites - 24%
- Visiting local breweries - 21%
- Fly fishing - 13%
- Attending festivals & events - 11%
- Followed by river rafting/floating, farmers markets, birding, skiing/snowboarding

Facebook Demographics – Top 4 Categories, 64%, are women

- 15% Women 35 to 44 Years
- 15% Women 45 to 54 Years
- 12% Women 25 to 34 Years
- 11% Women 55 to 64 Years

**Geographic – Non Resident
ITRR – Non Resident**

- ITRR 2014 – Texas, Minnesota, Missouri, Kentucky, Arizona (only 93 respondents)
- ITRR 2015 – Wyoming, Minnesota, California, Michigan
- ITRR 2016 – Wyoming, Minnesota, Washington, Colorado

RedLodge.com Travel Planner Requests

For 2016, 1510 travel planner packets were requested, a 3.4% increase over 2015. The Midwest accounted for 41% of all requests. Top states were Minnesota 10% and Wisconsin 5%

Facebook – Top 5 Cities (Outside Montana)

- Cody, WY
- Denver, CO
- Dallas, TX
- Minneapolis, MN
- Powell, WY

Facebook – Top 5 Cities (Within Montana)

- Billings
- Red Lodge
- Bozeman
- Laurel
- Missoula

b. What are your emerging markets?

Two Wheel travelers

Motorcyclists and bicyclists are attracted to the Beartooth Highway for its beauty and challenge. This segment of the tourism market is growing and important as they view the Highway as a destination and spend multiple nights in our area.

Foodies

Red Lodge has an array of excellent restaurants, an award winning brewery, and gourmet food and wine shops for those travelers that seek unique dining experiences.

Entertainment/Music Seekers

On any given night there are a number of bars and restaurants that feature live music, both local artists and touring bands. During the course of the year there are several events that bring world class musicians to Red Lodge to share their art, The Red Lodge Music Festival and the Red Lodge Songwriter Festival to name a few.

Billings

Billings is 60 miles away and has a population base of approximately 150,000. The Billings Convention and Meeting market is growing and we will continue to develop our relationship with the Billings CVB, Visit Billings. The Billings market is the perfect target to strengthen our winter destination business, especially on non-holiday weekends.

Corporate Retreats

Red Lodge is the perfect place for executive retreats and small group gatherings. Associations, social clubs and private companies located in Billings and Bozeman.

Areas to the East

Eastern Montana, North Dakota, and Minnesota continue as strong markets and will be the focus for our Winter destination marketing.

Colorado & other Mountain States

We have listed Colorado previously as a competitor for non-resident visitors. However, recent tourism data from the State of Montana indicate a rising interest in visiting Montana and specifically Red Lodge from Coloradans. As their own tourism industry continues to grow and their population continues its rapid growth, the competition for outdoor space grows in equal proportion. Many Colorado residents especially those from major metropolitan areas are looking for less crowded, less expensive, simpler destinations, much the way Colorado used to be. Red Lodge is the perfect fit, 8-9 hours drive or a one hour direct flight from Denver, their largest metropolitan area.

c. What research supports your target marketing?

ITTR 2015 non-resident study data showed the average length of stay for non-resident visitors to Montana was 6.24 nights with 71% of in Yellowstone Country. 67%. Non-resident travelers stated their primary reason for coming is vacation/recreation/pleasure, which leads to the supposition that they want a broader experience than just visiting Yellowstone Park.

Destination Analysts Report

This valuable report not only backs up ITRR reports but it also adds many new insights into not only our current market, but why that market exists and suggests what can be done to increase our accessibility and visits. We will continue to use this information throughout the year.

Beartooth Highway Economic Impact Research

During the winter season, Red Lodge, MT is not considered a gateway community because of road closures limiting access only to Cooke City/Colter Pass/Silver Gate, MT and Cody, WY (via the Chief Joseph Scenic Byway).

Nonresident visitor expenditures contributed to over \$63.4 million in economic activity to Carbon County in 2015, the vast majority being spent in Red Lodge. The economic impact for this region from nonresident travelers is substantial to local communities. Furthermore, results identified that nonresidents perceive the Beartooth Highway as a destination in itself, not simply a highway.

2015 average spending in Carbon County by nonresident visitors to Montana totaled \$63.4 million. This \$63.4 million in local spending directly supports \$40.2 million of economic activity in the region, and supports an additional \$16.1 million of economic activity, indirectly.

Source: http://scholarworks.umt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1352&context=itrr_pubs

Optional: Include attachment here.

Overall Goals

As we near our 4th year, we reflect on the success of the last. In 2016 Red Lodge received the MTOTBD Gateway Community of the Year award for our Branding Efforts. We are above our 2016 goals for Lodging Tax Collections and have increased our influence on social media through increasing our facebook fan base.

Improve Visitor Experience With Improved Signage and Infrastructure

We will accomplish this with a new branded entrance welcome sign, way-finding signage, visitor off-street parking, placemaking and parklets

Continue to Build Marketing Infrastructure

This will include, but not be limited to:

Consistent and informed Visitor Information Center staffing

Upgrade Visitors Center to enhance the guest experience and educate them to all the Red Lodge and the area has to offer.

- Increase Travel Planner Mailers
- Increase public awareness of what is happening in Red Lodge with targeted and regular staff written press releases
- Increase social media reach through facebook, instagram and twitter

Develop Cooperative Relationships within our Market Area

- Red Lodge Tourism Business Improvement District
- Yellowstone Country Travel Region
- City of Red Lodge

Increase Winter Season Visits

The Red Lodge TBID and Red Lodge CVB have joined in efforts to increase non alpine skiing related travel to Red Lodge.

Attract Groups, Meetings and Sporting Events

We will focus on smaller meetings (10-200 people) and social groups. We will also work to attract youth tournaments/events in the shoulder seasons.

Expand Alliances With Area Towns

Red Lodge is fortunate to be located near Billings - Montana's largest city. With this alliance, we want to support their efforts in promoting the Beartooth Highway as "The most scenic route to Yellowstone Park." Billings is also a hub for groups, conventions and meetings. We will work to strengthen our relationship with the Billings CVB to attract these groups to our area.

Cooke City is the “other side” of the Beartooth Highway and the Northeast Entrance to Yellowstone Park. It is mutually beneficial to strengthen our relationship.

Cody, Wyoming has the potential to be a very strong ally. Although they are essentially after the same visitor, by working together, we will attract more visitors to our side of Yellowstone Park driving visitors to the East and Northeast Entrances.

We will work with area communities to strengthen our relationships and promote Red Lodge through their Chambers and CVBs. These communities include Columbus, Big Timber and Bozeman.

Red Lodge Branding

The Red Lodge brand, Base Camp to the Beartooths, is in place and is being used across all our marketing platforms and media placements.

Measurable Objectives

Increase the MTOTBD Lodging Tax Collections 2%

Increase Travel Planner distribution by 1.5%

Increase Facebook ‘Friends’ by 1,000

Host two Youth Sporting Tournaments

Begin placement of Wayfinding infrastructure

Create CVB host program to encourage visits from meeting planners

Optional: Include attachments here.

a. In what types of Joint Ventures with MTOT would you like to participate?

MTOTBD - Winter OntheSnow.com

Cooperative advertising with Red Lodge Mountain targeting visitors to RedLodge.com to book ski vacations to Red Lodge and Red Lodge Mountain.

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

Yellowstone Country - Opportunity Marketing

Yellowstone County has opportunity funds available for cooperative marketing of new events

Billings CVB – Winter Marketing

Work with Visit Billings to help attract visitors to Red Lodge via Billings

Billings CVB – Meeting/Groups Marketing

Work with Visit Billings as a ‘day trip’ possibility for Meeting and Group planners. Our goal would be extended stays and return visits.

TBID and RLMLA

Create co-op opportunities with the Red Lodge TBID and Red Lodge Merchants and Lodging Association to promote events.

Optional: Include attachment here:

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

The Red Lodge Branding Project, lead by the CVB Branding Leadership Team, was funded by the Red Lodge Tourism Business Improvement District TBID, Yellowstone Country Travel Region and the Red Lodge Merchants and Lodging Association. Because of their help, no CVB funds were required. Red Lodge won the 2016 Gateway Community of the Year Award for the branding effort.

We work closely with the TBID on all marketing efforts.

Optional: Include attachments here. FY18_PIE_CHARTS.pdf
 FY18 RED LODGE CVB BUDGET.pdf

Marketing Segment, Strategy & Budget

Marketing Segment	Marketing Method	Does research support this method?	Describe your method.	Supporting research/statistics	Provide a brief rationale.	Plan to measure success?	Marketing Method Evaluation	Estimated budget for each method.	Non bed tax funds?	Add'l Attchmnts
Consumer	Electronic Adv - Newsletter, E-blast	Yes	We will be promoting Red Lodge as a destination through electronic newsletters minimum of once per month. Our email database includes 8,000 emails. Chamber staff will produce and circulate this newsletter to continually put Red Lodge at the forefront of consumers' decision	Our statistics show that 40% of this interested market resides in the Midwest but also proves that requests arrive from a world-wide base. The Red Lodge E-newsletter performs. With an Open Rate (OR) of 30-40% we are well above the median average of 15% for the Travel & Leisure Industry. Our Click Through Rate (CTR) of 4.3 also exceeds the median average of 1.5%. Promoting Red Lodge through digital and electronic media has proven to be an essential element in consumer demand and	Targeting our captive audience, who have already expressed an interest in visiting Red Lodge, Montana via electronic marketing and newsletters, will position Red Lodge as a vacation destination. Using the newsletter links to drive the consumer to our websites provides a further opportunity to educate and entice. The	Monthly review of enews metrics with attention to OR and CTR; consistently be above the National Average for the Travel and Leisure Industry. Reviewing the overall annual revenue provided through State bed tax reporting will allow us to compare previous year's statistics. Utilizing the quarterly based resort tax reporting from the city of Red		\$750.00	No	

			<p>making process, providing them the facilitation and navigation of Red Lodge at their fingertips. The newsletters will cover the shoulder season targets but also strive to increase occupancy levels during the high traffic summer months when guests are more likely to travel to Red Lodge due to personal schedules, weather, accessibility to Red Lodge and the State of Montana.</p> <p>The requested money will be used to fund an online enews subscription service ONLY.</p>	<p>requirement in today's economy.</p>	<p>newsletters will allow Red Lodge to showcase ease of accessibility, special events, and peak interest for the geotraveler in the culture, history and natural surroundings, wildlife viewing and adventure opportunities.</p>	<p>Lodge, itemized by category, will allow us to view traveler trends as well. We will be able to monitor and compare the enewsletter circulation with the rates of increased occupancy and spending. We will also rely on ITRR non-resident data reports specific to Red Lodge and Carbon County.</p>				
Consumer	Travel Guide	Yes	<p>Visitor's interested in visiting the Red Lodge area can request a travel planner and activities guide packet, either online or by phone, making it easy to obtain a quality piece full of information that will help</p>	<p>According to national travel statistics. 79% of requests are online or downloaded. Once the visitor's guide is in their hands, 70% actually travel to the destination. Once they are on the ground, 80% use it as a planning resource and 71% extend their stays as a result of the visitor's guide.</p> <p>In 2016, 1,500 Travel</p>	<p>Getting a travel planner into the potential visitors hands while they are still planning increases the awareness of Red Lodge as a destination and the most scenic route to Yellowstone Park. This is a catalyst for increased non-</p>	<p>Comparing year to date accommodations tax statistics, resort tax revenue, ITRR non-Resident Travel Data, Visitor Information Center top 10 visitor counts, and Destination Red Lodge Travel Planner Mailer statistics by origin of</p>	\$2,000.00	No	TRAVEL PLANNER REQUEST DEMOGRAPHICS 2016.pdf	

			the potential visitor make their destination decision as well as providing reasons to extend their stay.	Planner Packets were requested online.	resident visits and extended stays in Red Lodge.	requests as well as by specific overall state number of requests will allow us to measure the success of our targeted increased Travel Planner distribution results.			
Consumer	Social Media	Yes	<p>Our Marketing and PR person utilizes Social Media to enhance engagement with Red Lodge. While we have a relatively large social media following, primarily on Facebook, we have built the followers organically. Our strategy is to 'boost' important posts to increase engagement and use promotional ads to increase followers. Social Media is an efficient and growing advertising medium. Our strategy is intended to increase our followers and their interaction.</p> <p>We will use the Hootsuite account provided by Yellowstone</p>	<p>We have a combined following on Facebook of over 28,000, built almost entirely organically. Our posting strategy is to not 'over post' but to provide pertinent and engaging information that creates likes, comments and shares. Our post engagement typically creates 200% (or more) engagement with views, likes, shares and comments.</p> <p>Current Facebook Statistics: "Beartooth Highway" Facebook – 11,719 followers "Red Lodge Montana" Facebook – 16,587 followers</p> <p>Sample Facebook Post Statistics The "Beartooth Highway" Facebook content was viewed over 750,000 times annually and over 2,000 times per day Recent "Red Lodge Montana" Facebook content was viewed over 2,000,000 times annually and over 5,000 times per day</p>	<p>There are many benefits to a strong Social Media presence. It drives traffic to your website, reaches potential visitors, encourages user created content, user created shares, builds visitor engagement for return visits, event promotion, brand awareness and as an instant and efficient information source. Research shows that 85% of non-resident visitors to Montana plan to return within 2 years. Engaging these visitors through social media keeps Red Lodge top of mind when choosing a return destination. Much of this can be done organically, but this</p>	<p>Success will be measured using metrics provided by the social media platform, website metrics and Lodging Tax collections. Measurable objectives: 5% increase in social media followers over the prior year 2% increase in Red Lodge Resort Tax Collections over the previous year 1% increase in occupied room nights over the previous year as reported by Red Lodge TBID collections.</p>	\$1,200.00	No	

			Country to track and respond to 'Mentions' to grow our Instagram and Twitter accounts.		information distribution can be increased for a relatively low cost through 'boosting' a post of Geo and Demo Targeted ads. By using these targeting methods we can better attract the visitor that is looking for what Red Lodge has to offer.					
Consumer	Joint Ventures	No	<p>In the coming year, Red Lodge has plans to partner with Yellowstone Country Travel Region on various opportunities including print media, digital media, and fam tours.</p> <p>We will also continue to build our relationship with Billings and Southeast Montana, look for co-operative marketing opportunities and continuing to work with them to attract large groups to Montana.</p>	<p>We recently joined forces with Yellowstone Country to host the Warren Miller Entertainment film crew in Red Lodge for a 12 day shoot. The crew was very enthusiastic about their time in Red Lodge and on the Beartooth Pass. They have assured us footage of our area will be included in the movie.</p> <p>We worked with Visit Billings and Southeast Montana to help bring the Goldwing Convention to Billings. Although we played a small part, Red Lodge and the Beartooth Highway played an important role in bringing this large group to Montana.</p>	<p>Red Lodge has one of the smallest budgets of any CVB in Montana. By working with the regions and cities in our area, we have been able to leverage our small budget with our large tourism appeal. The Beartooth Highway is a major Montana attraction and working with Yellowstone Country, Visit Billings and Southeast Montana, we continue to grow the appeal of our area.</p>	<p>Success will not only be measured by increased awareness of and visitation to the Red Lodge area, but also by the opportunities presented to us by our marketing partners - Yellowstone Country, Visit Billings and Southeast Montana.</p>	\$1,000.00			
Consumer	Online/Digital Advertising		The objective	TripAdvisor is the	TripAdvisor is	TripAdvisor		\$4,500.00	No	

			<p>for national digital placements is to inspire potential travelers, and orient those that are researching and booking.</p> <p>Red Lodge will support its sponsored DMO page as well as targeted digital display ads - 200,000 impressions.</p> <p>All TripAdvisor advertising is being done through a cooperative effort with Yellowstone Country.</p>	<p>world's largest travel sit, enabling travelers to plan and experience the perfect trip. Complete with trusted advice from real travelers and a wide variety of choices, TripAdvisor is a trusted partner.</p>	<p>trusted and used by travelers around the world. By sponsoring our page we insure our advertising and message is viewed when the page is reached. By keeping our page current and full of information, we further solidify ourselves as a sought after destination in Montana.</p> <p>Our ad banners are designed to attract visitors to our DMO page as well as our websites.</p>	<p>provides many reporting tools to measure success. City and Attraction ranking tools will also be utilized.</p>			
Consumer	Printed Material	Yes	<p>Our strategy is to make our Travel Planner and Beartooth Highway brochure available to visitors at the Airports around Red Lodge. We have secured rack space at the Billings, Bozeman, and Cody Airports.</p> <p>The Bozeman, Mt and Cody, Wy Airports charge for this service. The Billings</p>	<p>Air travel to Montana continues to grow with Bozeman accounting for a large percentage of the growth. Both Billings and Bozeman have been working to promote new flights. Yellowstone Country along with Bozeman, Big Sky and others have worked together to subsidize the new flights.</p>	<p>Air travel is important to our area. We sit within 2 hours of 3 airports. Visitor's traveling to Yellowstone Park have a choice of entrances and exits to the Park. We feel that by having a presence with a compelling message, we will inspire the traveler to visit Red Lodge.</p>	<p>We track the number of travel planners and brochures supplied to various outlets and have seen an increase in the number picked up. We also ask out of state visitors to our VIC how they got to Montana. We are seeing an increase of visitor's flying into Bozeman.</p>		\$650.00	

			Airport does not charge.								
Group Marketing	Printed Material	Yes	<p>Red Lodge is a popular destination for meetings, retreats, weddings and reunions. Our strategy is to specialize in the smaller gatherings and make the meeting planners job easy. By providing invitation packets that include all pertinent information, both digitally and in print, we will make the planners decision easy. We will target the groups with the most potential, partnering with our local service organizations to bring in regional and national conventions. We will also target our regional businesses including the growing medical facilities in the region.</p>	<p>Red Lodge is a sought after vacation destination. Because of our amenities, location and access to outdoor recreation, we have become a popular wedding destination with most wedding venues booked a year in advance for the popular months.</p> <p>Meetings have a great potential for shoulder/off season and mid week visits. Most business meetings take place during the work week and have the potential to lead to the weekend with extended stays. Business meetings are typically scheduled away from the busy 'vacation' months.</p> <p>Group visitor's that have a good experience will return.</p>	<p>Red Lodge is a quickly becoming a destination vacation area. Because of this our summers and the months surrounding the summer months are full on weekends. For our tourism economy to continue to grow, we need to better fill our weekdays and the shoulder season months. This is a challenge faced by every area with a tourism based economy. We are confident this strategy will increase our room nights and stimulate the towns economy in the slower periods.</p> <p>By sending the visitor home with quality take aways, we are increasing our opportunity for a return visit.</p>	<p>We will work closely with our local meeting and wedding venues to measure increases in bookings and overall stays with a focus on the shoulder seasons.</p>		\$1,000.00	No		
Marketing Support	Administration	No							\$3,900.00	No	
Marketing Support	Opportunity Marketing	Yes	Having \$1000 reserved for Opportunity	We have been working together with Yellowstone Country,	Opportunities arise that we don't always	Depending on the opportunity that arises, we			\$1,000.00	No	

			<p>Marketing prepares us to take advantage of prospects that will protect and promote Red Lodge to that which we cannot foresee at the given time. These funds will also be available for co-operative marketing opportunities.</p> <p>Our strategy is to be prepared for these opportunities.</p>	<p>the Red Lodge Tourism Business Improvement District and Red Lodge Merchants and Lodging Association to better place ourselves for continued collaborative opportunities.</p>	<p>foresee, such as an opportunity to showcase the community or to mitigate negative publicity from a natural disaster such as forest fire or other natural disaster.</p> <p>Opportunity Marketing allows us to position ourselves as premier vacation destinations no matter what the challenge. Staying in front of the news through all modes of communication will provide us the sustainability to maintain our revenue.</p>	<p>will only be able to determine how to best measure that opportunity's immediate and long term results after the opportunity presents itself.</p> <p>However, we will be paying close attention to the travel trends after the opportunity marketing is released, try to incorporate a code specific fulfillment component, resort tax revenue itemized by category within the quarter of marketing release date, Facebook and website increases, place of origin, comments, etc.</p>				
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	Yes						\$1,500.00	No	
Marketing Support	VIC Funding/Staffing/Signage	Yes	<p>5% of the CVB bed tax revenue will be used for VIC Staffing. Our strategy is to increase a paid Staff person's time professionally serving the public by approximately 100 hours annually. This will have a significant impact on the service that we will be</p>	<p>Every year over 8,000 travelers enter the Visitor's Information Center requesting information about the Area. In 2016, the overall RLA Chamber budget was \$110,000.00 with payroll and liabilities expenses equivalent to 40%-50% of the budget. The revenue generated by the CVB positively impacts our scope of services. We receive an additional grant from Yellowstone Country to help staff our visitor center. We</p>	<p>The funds will be applied to the fulfillment component of increasing awareness, group travel promotion and providing increased levels of quality service for Red Lodge. Increasing the staff time, the hours of operation, the efficiency and level of knowledge the</p>	<p>Listening to the voices of our Membership and other groups such as the TBID and Red Lodge Merchants and Lodging Association in Red Lodge will be our greatest public accolades. Being able to serve the community the way that our Membership needs us to is very important to</p>		\$1,000.00	No	

			able to provide.	are open from 10-4 during the shoulder and winter seasons. Beginning annually November through March with an average of 4.5 weeks per month multiplied by 30 hours per week hours of operation (M-F 10-4), there is a need for Staffing 675 hours during this specified time period. During peak periods Memorial Day through Labor Day, the center is staffed with visitor counselors from 9am - 5pm Monday thru Friday and 9am - 1pm Saturday and Sunday.	Visitor Counselors provide will mitigate and dispel the challenges outlined. This centralized fulfillment component will be in place to assist group travel planners, families who visit in the winter and the secret season traveler who spends more time, money and resources.	the Visitors Center Board. We could attribute extended stays to additional staff time and more thorough service by tracking increased TBID and Lodging Tax collections. We will immediately be able to decrease the number of missed phone calls, delayed response time on our email inquiries on a regular basis with additional Staffing.			
Publicity	Fam Trips	Yes	We will invite media, meeting planners, group organizers and social influencers to Red Lodge with the goal of extended visits and press. Networking opportunities will be seized at every opportunity to build solid relationships with journalists and social media influencers – targeting those that offer insight or leads including adventure, history, culture, recreation	Visitors attending meetings, weddings, conventions or other group activities, will return for an extended visit - if they have a good first experience. Most meetings are mid-week and off season.	Red Lodge is an incredible area and, once visited, not forgotten. Our only drawback has been a lack of awareness of our area compared to surrounding towns. We have found that the more influencers and group organizers we can get to Red Lodge to experience all we have to offer, the more good press we receive.	We will track the number of influencers, groups and meetings as well as all mentions in press and social media.	\$1,000.00	No	

			and food and beverage publications.							
									\$19,500.00	

Marketing Method Budget

Marketing Segment	Marketing Method	Bed tax funded budget	Non bed tax funded budget
Consumer	Electronic Adv - Newsletter, E-blast	\$750.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Travel Guide	\$2,000.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Social Media	\$1,200.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Joint Ventures	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Printed Material	\$650.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Online/Digital Advertising	\$4,500.00	\$0.00
		\$10,100.00	\$0.00
Group Marketing	Printed Material	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
		\$1,000.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Administration	\$3,900.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Opportunity Marketing	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	\$1,500.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	VIC Funding/Staffing/Signage	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
		\$7,400.00	\$0.00
Publicity	Fam Trips	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
		\$1,000.00	\$0.00
		\$19,500.00	\$0.00

Miscellaneous Attachments

File Name	Description	File Size
2014-2015 state counts page.xlsx (20 KB)	CVB 2014-15 VIC State Counts Page Reference	20 KB
Beartooth Highway Economic Impact Study.pdf (4.4 MB)	Beartooth Highway Economic Impact Study	4.4 MB
CVB 2015-16 VIC State Count.pdf (27 KB)	2015-2016 VIC State and Country Count	27 KB
Red Lodge FY18 CVB Marketing Plan rev.pdf (3.9 MB)	Red Lodge CVB FY18 Marketing Plan	3.9 MB
TRAVEL PLANNER REQUEST DEMOGRAPHICS 2016.pdf (31 KB)	Travel Planner 2016 Demographics	31 KB
TRAVEL PLANNER REQUEST DEMOGRAPHICS.pdf (31 KB)	Travel Planner Packet Request Demographics	31 KB

Reg/CVB Required Documents

File Name	Description	File Size
Applicants Certificate of Compliance FY18.pdf (42 KB)	Red Lodge CVB Certificate of Compliance FY18	42 KB
Application For Lodging Tax Revenue FY18.pdf (31 KB)	Red Lodge CVB Application For Lodging Tax Revenue FY18	31 KB
Pledge of Understanding FY18.pdf (32 KB)	Red Lodge CVB Pledge of Understanding and Compliance FY18	32 KB
