



Application

55917 - FY18 Region/CVB Marketing Plan - Final Application

58864 - FY18 Visit Southeast Montana Marketing Plan
DOC Office of Tourism

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Organization Information

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Organization Type: Non-Profit Organization
Organization Website: www.southeastmontana.com
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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?

The Organization

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

What We Do

Visit Southeast Montana's Mission Statement directs us to bring tourists to our region, and we accomplish this using a wide variety of tools and

methods. These include placing ads in national magazines, national and regional travel websites and regional newspapers, travel guides, and websites. We also create an online presence with strategic digital advertising.

The consumer website at www.southeastmontana.com was built in partnership with the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development, which agreed to build it for us at no cost. This partnership has not only helped save us money, but it will allow us to tap into the significant number of visitors to the state's travel website at www.visitmt.com.

Visit Southeast Montana partners with the region's three Convention & Visitors Bureaus (Billings, Miles City and Glendive) along with hoteliers, chambers of commerce and other tourism-related entities including state parks, county and federal representatives.

Opportunities/Strengths

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

Outdoor Recreation: There is no doubt that opportunities for outdoor recreation abound across Southeast Montana. Fisherman will appreciate the world-class fishing opportunities available along the Bighorn and Musselshell Rivers, Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area (BCNRA) and the Paddlefish Harvest along the banks of the Yellowstone River near Glendive, along with an emerging bass fishery on the Yellowstone River. Hunters continue to pay premium prices to travel to the Powder River area to bag trophy deer and antelope. The Bull Mountains near Roundup are a rising star for elk hunters, and Eastern Montana is becoming known throughout the surrounding states for being great bird hunting country, allowing hunters to stretch their hunting season with pheasant, grouse, chukers, ducks and geese. Hiking and camping enthusiasts will relish the freedom and solitude of the Custer National Forest, Chalk Buttes, and Medicine Rocks.

Makoshika State Park, Montana's largest state park, features some of the nation's most spectacular badlands scenery while the Terry Badlands remain pristine.

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

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

Many other state parks, museums and historic sites tell their own stories of pioneer life on the prairie, the Native American struggle to leave behind their nomadic way of life and the impact of the cattle trade on the American West. From large and well-known to more intimate, all are part of the story of the American West and can be experienced in Southeast Montana.

Accessibility and Facilities: Southeast Montana is fortunate to contain two of the state's busiest highways, Interstate 94 and Interstate 90. Billings Logan Airport boasts United, Delta, American and Alaska/Horizon Airlines direct service to 10 destinations. New direct Dallas/Fort Worth service from Billings begins in 2017 along with extended seasonal direct service to/from Chicago from United Airlines. This brings travelers directly into Southeast Montana. Billings also has the state's largest and most advanced convention facilities. Shoppers are drawn to the region's boutique local shops to major shopping centers. Lodging opportunities in Southeast Montana are the most diverse in the state, including everything from 4-star hotels, to charming bed and breakfasts, RV parks and hunting and fishing lodges.

Dinosaur Adventure: There are several organizations which host dinosaur digs for groups and individuals in the fossil- rich badlands of Southeast Montana. Famous dinosaurs taken from the Southeast Montana area of the Hell Creek Formation include Tyrannosaurus Rex, Maiasaura, and Triceratops. Walk with the dinosaurs in Makoshika State Park and visit three museums and facilities that are active members of the Montana Dinosaur Trail. The museums showcase the many paleontological treasures which have been discovered in Eastern Montana, some of which are entirely unique to this area. Museums of particular interest to dinosaur enthusiasts include the Carter County Museum, Glendive Dinosaur & Fossil Museum, Frontier Gateway Museum and the Makoshika State Park Interpretive Center.

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

Key Challenges Facing the Region

Perception that Montana is far away and difficult to travel to: According to the 2016 Montana Destination Brand Research Study by Destination Analytics, Montana is perceived as challenging to access with associated time and cost that prohibits visitation. Conversely, Colorado (the top regional competitor) was cited as the best destination in regard to scenic beauty, potential for vacation road trip, family-friendly environment, national parks, winter recreational activities and places “I most want to visit.” However, Montana as a whole and Southeast Montana specifically are well-positioned to capitalize on Colorado’s weaknesses: crowded attractions; lack of or losing authenticity; high costs and over- development. Lastly, the increase of direct flights to Billings (most notably the recent American Airlines Billings – Dallas/Fort Worth) will facilitate more tourists traveling directly to Southeast Montana. For some urban travelers, they may spend more time traveling to the airport from their home than they will actually flying to Southeast Montana.

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

Distances Between Services: Today’s traveler has higher expectations in terms of cellular service and conductivity to a global network. The distances between towns and services are a challenge to Southeast Montana – yet it is that very element that also enhances its appeal, as long as travelers know what to expect. For example, placing the “get away from it all” concept into a mini-marketing campaign that includes tear-off and downloadable maps and itineraries can help orientate the traveler. Additionally, educating the staff at the three regional Visitor Information Centers about the rest of the region will facilitate sharing of regional information.

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

Alignment with Montana's Brand Pillars

The Montana Brand consists of three pillars, with which Visit Southeast Montana aligns:

1. More spectacular, unspoiled nature than anywhere else in the lower 48;
2. Vibrant and charming small towns that serve as gateways to our natural wonders; and
3. Breathtaking experiences by day and relaxing hospitality at night.

Southeast Montana is where the mountains meet the prairies and the rivers flow. As such, the region defines "spectacular, unspoiled nature" with Glendive being a primary example of a "gateway to natural wonders" (as found in Makoshika State Park). Unspoiled nature abounds in Southeast Montana, from the Big Sky Back Country Byway and Calypso Trail near Terry, to the haunting rock formations at Medicine Rocks State Park near Ekalaka, to the immense and majestic beauty of the Bighorn Canyon. The region is dotted with charming small towns such as Broadus, where a cowboy can still turn horses-and-wagon on the extra-wide main street to Terry, the home of Eveyln Cameron - each town exudes its own personality, built by generations of families, industry and storied events.

Long-standing events such as the Bucking Horse Sale (since 1950) or Crow Fair (99 years in 2017) showcase "breathtaking experiences by day" while the "relaxing hospitality by night" can be found throughout the region's unique dining experiences and array of lodging options from rustic camping to luxurious facilities like Northern Hotel in Billings. The beauty of Southeast Montana lies in its natural wonders and the plethora of options for travelers and tourists alike.

Optional: Include attachments here

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

The Travel Decision Process

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

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

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

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

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

Optional: Include attachments here.

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

By looking at everything we do through the lens of the Travel Decision Process, Visit Southeast Montana is better able to strategically focus its marketing efforts to maximize the positive economic impact through tourism to our region with our limited budget. As such, our geographic, demographic and psycho-graphic target markets will be the same as those of the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development's.

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

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

The Destination Analysts study (pages 44 - 45) also notes the HPV's desired activities include:

#1: day hikes;

#3: dining out in restaurants;

#5: Visit Lewis & Clark-related historical sites;

#6: Drive scenic byways;

#7: Explore small towns and villages;

#8: Visit geological/dinosaur-related historical sites;

#9: Visit Native American history or cultural sites; and

#10: canoeing, kayaking or boating.

With the exception of #s 2 and 4 (GNP and YNP), all of these experiences are found in and emphasized by Southeast Montana, specifically Pompey's Pillar National Monument, Little Bighorn National Monument, Bighorn Canyone National Recreation Area and the Dino Trail.

It is obvious that Visit Southeast Montana has ideal offerings for the HPV.

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

b. What are your emerging markets?

Considering this information and Southeast Montana's limited budget, we will focus on the markets described, including History Buffs, and specifically

including:

1. Travelers who have already visited Montana.
2. Visitors from the regions surrounding SEMT including northern Wyoming, western South Dakota and western North Dakota along with residents of central and western Montana.

c. What research supports your target marketing?

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

This information closely aligns with Visit Southeast Montana's 2010-11 research project, which provided insight of Visit SEMT's target markets as well as many other aspects of Visit SEMT, in regard to how to best achieve the mission. A brief summary of the findings is attached under "Miscellaneous Attachments."

SEMT also incorporates ITRR data, when applicable, to further enhance understanding of the target market.

Optional: Include attachment here. Montana Brand Exploration Research - Final Report of Findings V2 - Novme... (004).pdf

Overall Goals

The mission of Visit Southeast Montana is to increase tourism to Southeast Montana by increasing awareness of our region, showcasing our cultural heritage, developing memorable experiences and educating our residents about the economic benefits of tourism.

As a result of an online survey of SEMT Board members, we have identified these strategic goals:

1. Grow In-region Partnerships

A region as physically large as Southeast Montana is truly diverse, and as the foundation of Visit Southeast Montana, regional partners and stakeholders must be committed and strong. It is also within this diversity that the region's strength lies. To grow and further enhance those relationships, we will focus on:

- a) Reaching out to each and every partner – existing and new – while familiarizing ourselves with their product, connecting via social media, ensuring that their “asset” with Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD) is updated and, in general, reiterating that we are here to help promote tourism across the region, including their organization, destination or tourism-related business. This grassroots networking will be time- and labor-intensive but will yield a more intimate knowledge base of the entire region. This strategy will include, but not be limited to, creating and sharing low- and no-cost marketing guidelines for partners throughout the region including information on tools like Trip Advisor and Yelp.
- b) Facilitate stronger partnerships by presenting to regional Chambers, tourism entities (convention and visitors bureaus, tourism business improvement districts), civic groups and the like – sharing SEMT's mission and passion to succeed demonstrates the value that Visit SEMT places on its partners and stakeholders.

- c) Revamp the Partner Website – www.semtpartners.com is a key component to communication throughout the region and it is sorely in need of an update. Input for the redesign could come from in-person meetings and phone conversations during the networking process defined above and/or from an online survey sent to all partners, asking what features they consider most valuable.
- d) Develop and share in-region master calendar of events.
- e) Reach out to new leadership within Crow and Northern Cheyenne tribes.
- f) Invite Board member(s) to contribute their expertise to tradeshow and media or fam tours.

2. Develop Marketing Partnerships

Rather than be an island looking for visitors, we will reach outside the region to facilitate and strengthen relationships with neighboring states, regions and DMOs along with MOTBD bureaus and programs. Initial steps could be a regional familiarization tour (“fam”), working cooperatively at larger leisure travel shows and/or initiating new cooperative marketing campaigns such as downloadable and/or printed inter-regional maps and itineraries. Working under the Montana brand we have and will continue to promote Southeast Montana as a destination to international markets, specifically Europe, Japan and China. Additionally, we will:

- a) Foster relationship with MOTBD and Hoffman York (MOTBD’s agency of record) by inviting them on a regional fam tour.
- b) Continuing the Montana Dino Trail relationship (which includes three locations in SEMT, plus three other MT regions).
- c) Establish connections specifically with CVBs in Sheridan, Cody and Gillette, WY; Rapid City/Black Hills, SD; YNP; GNP; and, Theodore Roosevelt NP/Medora, ND. (potential for quarterly calls).
- d) Connect with Tribal Tourism.

3. Support Tourism Product Development

Growing in terms of service and sophistication is necessary for success in today’s tourism market. Travelers expect the conveniences of home with an authentic yet urban edge to their experience. As thus, we will support the development of new tourism products, as allowed within regulations, plus share our knowledge, expertise and influence to move a project forward. By focusing on Goal #1, we will be able to identify and refer tourism projects to MOTBD for further assistance. Additionally, we will monitor legislative policies that could affect tourism.

- a) Discuss public policy statement within region.
- b) Seek projects that need assistance, specifically local (i.e. Custer Loop), state parks (i.e. Rosebud Battlefield or Makoshika), national parks and monuments, and hunting/fishing (i.e. FWP).

4. Produce Quality Marketing Initiatives

Visit Southeast Montana’s marketing methods will continue to follow the Inspiration-Orientation-Facilitation strategy outlined in this Marketing Plan. A key component, however, will be the integration across platforms along with branding and consistent messaging. For example, while social media may highlight upcoming events, it will incorporate the ever-growing photo library while weaving pre-designated messages (i.e. Southeast Montana is not as far away as you think) into the overall landscape. This seamless melding of messaging will be subtle but consistent from advertising, to social media, to branding and collateral, to media relations and appealing to the ever-growing global market. It will include these key components:

Travel Guide: Use the Visit Southeast Montana guide in conjunction with the Montana guide, realizing that the MT guide is primarily an inspiration piece while ours plays a significant role in navigation and in slowing people down and directing them to lesser known areas of our region.

Website: Coordinate with the state to determine how best to design and position the website to provide inspiration, orientation and facilitation for visitors. Recognize that the state site will often be the first point of contact for visitors coming to any part of Montana. Position the Visit Southeast Montana website to catch visitors on vistMT.gov seeking more detailed information about Southeast Montana. We must also continually revisit our website with a discerning eye to be certain it is fresh, relevant and up-to-date with current web trends and technologies.

Public Relations: Develop an online media kit with all of the tools and information a journalist would need to write a story on our region. This online resource will help Visit Southeast Montana to attract more earned media which will in turn increase national and international knowledge about our area.

Social Media: Continually present fresh, exciting and inspirational content before viewers to keep Southeast Montana at the forefront of travelers' minds as that "place I really want to visit someday soon" and tie that inspiration back to the website.

We will also continually seek out new marketing methods in order to remain current, up-to-date, and effective in bringing more tourism business to our constituents.

Optional: Include attachments here.

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

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

Social media influencers are an emerging marketing strategy, and we would like to partner with MOTBD to explore options that are very specific to the Southeast Montana experience.

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

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

As noted in Visit Southeast Montana's Overall Goals above, we will actively seek relationships with both inter-region CVBs and DMOs and with neighboring states, regions and DMOs. The continued success of the Dino Trail is an excellent example of a Joint Venture between regions, CVBs and DMOs in Montana. Additionally, creating thematic maps to orientate visitors to locations such as historic locations, coffee stops, ice cream shops or breweries and distilleries throughout the regions would be an great opportunity for Visit SEMT, CVBs and DMOs to work together. Additionally, we seek to collaborate with Tribal Tourism entities to continue to promote Native American events and venues for visitors.

Optional: Include attachment here:

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

As noted above, the Dino Trail, which includes three locations in Southeast Montana and has regional support, is an excellent example of a successful Joint Venture; it continues to move forward.

Additionally, Visit Southeast Montana is currently working with both Miles City and Visit Glendive to promote the May events like the Paddlefish Harvest and the Bucking Horse Sale either via advertising (print and online) and/or via social media presence. A recent Visit Southeast Montana Facebook video, in conjunction with Visit Billings, during the PBR generated over 13,000 views -- an outstanding success.

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

Overall, we plan to continue with joint ventures whenever possible and feasible.

Optional: Include attachments here.

Visit SEMT FY18 budget pie chart.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	Print Advertising	Yes	This method includes ad production and media purchasing for print advertising. As an important element of Visit Southeast Montana's media mix, regional media will primarily promote events and weekend/short-vacation travel. Some ads may be produced as a co-op with MOTBD, others in conjunction with regional	Information collected from ITRR and Destination Analytics support this project. Please see the Marketing Plan Narrative for information regarding SEMT Research. The comprehensive research identifies target markets, which are similar to the target market of the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development. We use this research to determine which publications best reach our designated target market. According to the 2016 Montana Destination	Print advertising allows us to reach a different audience than online advertising while also complimenting online ads. Due to changes in technology and target market behavior, we will spend a larger percentage of our budget on online advertising than print advertising. We will also favor print ads that include an	Success will be measured based on the number of calls made to our call center as a result of that individual print ad, in addition to increased attendance at events. The call center workers are trained to gather this information from those who call in looking for information about SEMT.		\$90,000.00	No	

partners. For example, a portion of the budget will be dedicated a collaborative project with Visit Billings, promoting the new American Airlines Dallas/Fort Worth - Billings direct flight, which will bring travelers directly into Southeast Montana.

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

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

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

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

editorial component.

Consumer	Online/Digital Advertising	Yes	<p>Online advertising will be used to promote Visit SEMT to HVP visitors in all three phases of the travel decision process. Online advertising will be both regional and national and will direct traffic directly to the Visit Southeast Montana website and, in some cases, to the SEMT Facebook page. Additionally, a portion of the budget will be dedicated a collaborative project with Visit Billings, promoting the new American Airlines Dallas/Fort Worth - Billings direct flight, which will bring travelers directly into Southeast Montana.</p>	<p>The year-long research project undertaken by SEMT, as well as up to date information collected from ITRR, support this project. Please see the Marketing Plan Narrative for information regarding SEMT Research.</p> <p>Our research project, as well as research conducted by MOTBD, show that the target market increasingly uses online advertising to plan travel. We use this research to very specifically target our advertising on websites where users are in the process of planning a vacation, or may be planning a vacation. The research also shows that we should dedicate more funds to online advertising than print advertising.</p>	<p>Online advertising is by far the best way to reach a targeted audience. The analytics we receive from our website give us valuable information as to the engagement the target market has with each ad and whether it leads them to spend significant time on our website learning about SEMT. Those directed to our FB page who like the page will receive regular updates from SEMT regarding attractions and events, plus inspirational posts on a regular basis.</p> <p>For example, we can specifically target ads about Pompey's Pillar and/or Clark Days to consumer's who have demonstrated an interest in history or the Lewis & Clark Expedition, based on their previous online activity or "profile." Or, individuals who identify with fossils and dinosaurs can be "served" an ad for Makoshika State Park, the Dino Trail</p>	<p>Success will be measured based on Visit SEMT's web analytics. The Visit SEMT Board has set goals for the SEMT website to reach in terms of unique visits to the website. Google Analytics will be used. Each online advertisement can be tracked and its success or failure will be determined in this fashion.</p>	\$179,000.00	No	
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					and/or one of several dinosaur-related facilities in Southeast Montana.					
Consumer	Travel/Trade Shows	Yes	<p>SEMT attends a variety of consumer and travel tradeshows and conventions in order to promote the region to an audience which is targeted by geography, interest, and demographics. Consumer shows primarily target directly to the leisure traveler, allowing us to provide specific guidance and printed information in a one-on-one arena, often to people who are already planning trips to Yellowstone or Glacier and are in the Orientation and Inspiration phases of the travel decision process.</p> <p>Travel tradeshows are appointment-based shows and target international tour operators. These shows are sometimes attended as a co-op with MTOT.</p>	<p>The year-long research project undertaken by SEMT, as well as up to date information collected from ITRR, support this project. Please see the Marketing Plan Narrative for information regarding SEMT Research. Additionally, we are taking information about outdoor adventures directly to the high potential visitor (HPV) as identified by the Destination Analysts, Inc. study.</p> <p>As mentioned in our narrative, one of the aspects of our target market is that they are already considering a trip, or a return trip, to Montana. We travel to these shows to provide orientation and facilitation to those already somewhat familiar with the region.</p>	<p>These shows allow us to build relationships and speak face to face both with the potential traveling public and tour operators who bring a number of international travelers to our state each year. At these venues we can ask the operator specific questions about their clients' needs or ask the traveler what interests them (outdoor adventure, history, Native American culture, dino trails, dining/night life, etc.) and tailor our responses to specifically and accurately promote what Southeast Montana offers that coincides with their wants and needs.</p>	<p>Success will be measured based on the number of sign-up sheets collected at consumer shows(which are added to the Consumer Database) and by contacts made and bookings confirmed by international tour operators.</p> <p>As per conversations during the MOTBD monthly calls, shows are notoriously difficult to measure; however, we opted to eliminate the Las Vegas Cowboy Christmas show, mainly due to excessive costs. We have better success with the Northwest Outdoors Show (Minneapolis, MN -- a strong drive market for SEMT) and regional shows that focus on the outdoor adventure aspect.</p>		\$8,200.00	No	

Consumer	Travel Guide	Yes	<p>This line item covers the travel guide, which is distributed throughout the region, at leisure shows and via the fulfillment center. Information in the guide may include, but is not limited to, outdoor adventure, cowboy-related events, hunting and fishing information, targeted itineraries and basic info for all SEMT's tourism attractions, plus a regional map to orient the traveler.</p>	<p>Research conducted by the MOTBD supports the continued need for printed material, including a comprehensive travel guide, even in the digital age. Our own research has shown that visitors often use the guides as an aid when travelling through parts of SEMT which have poor or no cell phone service. Additionally, this document, with its incredible photography, inspires travelers to explore places they may not have known existed.</p>	<p>A quality, attractive travel guide is essential in helping visitors both plan their trip and navigate the region's tourism assets while in the region. The guide serves as an introduction to the region and a gateway through which visitors are drawn to the Visit SEMT website.</p>	<p>Success will be measured based on feedback from VIC staff, SEMT staff attending conventions and by web analytics tracking traffic to content-specific areas of the website driven by the guides. Additionally, we track the number of guides requested via the fulfillment center and at leisure and tradeshow.</p>	\$45,000.00	No
Consumer	Photo/Video Library	Yes	<p>Stunning photography is a key element to the inspirational piece of the marketing funnel. We will dedicate funds to continue to build the photo library, seeking to own photos for multiple uses (i.e. advertising, travel guide, travel show booth, social media, etc.) rather than purchase for one-time uses. Additionally, we will incorporate photo rights into social influencers agreements when and where possible,</p>	<p>Quality images are crucial to strong marketing initiatives and provide the Inspiration piece of the funnel. Research conducted by Visit SEMT staff at tradeshow events, in visitor information centers and other places has shown that there is a need for fresh, quality awe-inspiring photos to promote the region.</p>	<p>We will also work with MOTBD and Hoffman York to secure images of Southeast Montana if and when the opportunities arise. As another option, we will consider hosting a photo contest to both build excitement about regional images plus acquire the use of those images, provided this can be accomplished within the rules and regulations.</p>	<p>While most photographs are simply part of brand lift, some images, particularly those shared via social media, can be measure by analytics. However, without stellar images, Visit Southeast Montana would struggle to inspire.</p>	\$7,000.00	No

			thus stretching those dollars.							
Consumer	Website/Internet Development/Updates	Yes	This method provides funding for upgrades and updates to the SEMT website which fall outside the partnership SEMT has with MTOT regarding the website. This method also includes funding for the development of new or acquisition of existing photos and videos to be used on the website.	The year-long research project undertaken by SEMT, as well as up to date information collected from ITRR and Destination Analytics, Inc., support this project. Please see the Marketing Plan Narrative for information regarding SEMT Research. Research has shown that the most commonly used source for travel planning is online research using DMO websites and other online sources.	The Visit Southeast Montana website requires maintenance, content updates and upgrades to remain a viable source of information.	Success will be measured based on increases in key web analytics.		\$1,000.00	No	
Consumer	Electronic Adv - Newsletter, E-blast	Yes	Consumer-facing E-newsletters will be sent out from time to time to inform those in our consumer database of interesting tourist attractions in SEMT, as well as upcoming events.	The year-long research project undertaken by SEMT, as well as up to date information collected from ITRR and Destination Analysts, support this project. Please see the Marketing Plan Narrative for information regarding SEMT Research. Research shows that online research is the number one way visitors plan future vacations. Our E-Blasts use this media to guide potential visitors to relevant areas of our website where they can receive information in planning their trip.	Email is a convenient medium to help inform our database of upcoming events which are time sensitive. Additionally, we will incorporate newly-acquired photos into this method and tie it to social media campaigns.	Success will be measured based on analytics we receive on our database, such as members added and dropped along with "opens." We will also monitor attendance and promoted events to watch for trends related to e-newsletter mailings.		\$1,000.00	No	
Consumer	Printed Material	Yes	This line item provides for funds to produce targeted print	Our own research conducted at travel trade shows and other events has shown that targeted pieces grab attention. By	Though the travel guide provides a good overview of the region, we have	Success will be measured based on reports from staff attending		\$7,000.00	No	

			<p>pieces promoting more specific aspects of Visit Southeast Montana. These print pieces may include, but are not limited to, rodeo calendars of events for cowboy-related events, hunting and fishing information and targeted itineraries such as thematic maps.</p> <p>Additionally, these items could include cooperative efforts.</p> <p>The amount includes production, print and shipping costs.</p>	<p>producing smaller pieces with more specific information that meets the needs or wants of the reader, they will be more inspired to take action.</p>	<p>discovered a need for more targeted print material to be mailed out to those requesting information and distributed at conventions and in VICs.</p>	<p>events where the pieces are handed out. Any vanity URLs will also be tracked using web analytics to determine whether the brochures are driving traffic to the SEMT website.</p>				
Marketing Support	Administration	No	<p>In our FY18 Marketing Plan Budget, Visit Southeast Montana is budgeting the full 20% allowable for Administrative Expenses. Our strategy in doing so is to take a conservative stance in terms of how much of the Administrative Budget will ultimately used. By budgeting for the full 20%, we don't run the risk of going over budget for allowable Administrative expenses.</p>		<p>Administrative expenses, including mileage reimbursements for travel to stakeholders and events across this vast region, are necessary for the fulfillment of Visit Southeast Montana's mission.</p>	<p>Success for this method is difficult to measure. As long as the administrative side of SEMT continues to run smoothly, and the funds are used in a responsible matter, we will continue the method to be a success.</p>		\$112,000.00	No	

Marketing Support	Marketing/Publicity Personnel	Yes	Visit Southeast Montana will employ a full-time Marketing Manager and a part-time Social Media/PR Manager in FY18. The Marketing Manager is responsible for implementation of marketing and public relations projects as assigned. A full job description is attached. The Social Media/PR Manager assists the Marketing Manager and will develop, manage and monitor publicity and communications projects and programs. A complete job description is attached.	All of our research has shown that it is necessary to market a region to travelers in order to encourage them to visit and to see sights and attractions which might not otherwise be known to them. Marketing staff is necessary in order to facilitate the many projects and tasks needed in order to accomplish this.	These positions are a very efficient and cost effective means to handle our marketing. The value of the local knowledge of the region, relationships with stakeholders and familiarity with events cannot be overstated.	Success will be measured dependent on annual marketing goals set by the SEMT Board of Directors. Marketing Personnel are also evaluated annually by John Brewer, CEO of Visit Southeast Montana.		\$71,000.00	No	PR-Social Media Manager.pdf
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	No	Staff from Montana's tourism regions are strongly encouraged to attend the Montana Governor's Conference on Tourism and Tourism Advisory Council meetings. This line item sets aside funding to allow us to do so.		Funding is needed for car rentals, mileage, hotel reservations, food per diem, and other misc. expenses during travel to TAC and Governor's Conference meetings.	Success will be measured by whether we are able to attend said meetings or not.		\$2,000.00	No	
Marketing Support	Professional Development	No	This line item provides funds for Visit Southeast Montana staff to		DMAI provides staff with the opportunity to network with fellow DMO	Success will be measured via a report from the Visit Southeast		\$5,000.00	No	

			attend Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI). This is an allowable expense under TAC regulations.		employees and to learn about new trends, opportunities and technology in the destination marketing industry. It's important that staff remain up to date on what is happening amongst other DMOs from states throughout the nation.	Montana staff member who attends the conference as to what they learned and how they will apply the knowledge to promoting the region.			
Marketing Support	Fulfillment/Telemarketing	Yes	This method covers expenses to field inquiries (calls, email) from potential visitors and provide them with requested printed material via mail. Expenses include agency fees, shipping, postage and storage. This method also covers the cost to distribute the Visit Southeast Montana travel guides to locations across Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota and North Dakota, primarily to locations frequented by travelers.	Research conducted by Visit SEMT, MOTBD and ITRR has shown that Travel Guides and phone inquiries are ways in which visitors gather information and plan trips. Fulfillment, both in mailing brochures to those who request them, and in answering toll-free phone calls regarding a visit to Southeast Montana, helps provide these services to potential visitors.	Some ads and printed material, plus the website, feature a toll-free number encouraging travelers with questions to call and/or request a travel guide. It's important we continue to provide this service to potential visitors. We add the collected email addresses to the Consumer e-blast database, continuing to grow that communication line. Additionally, we distribute travel guides to locations throughout Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota and North Dakota to keep that inspirational and guiding piece at the forefront of	Success will be measured based on the number of calls fielded and material sent. At the end of the fiscal year these numbers will be compared to expenses to determine whether it is the most efficient way to meet customer needs.	\$28,500.00	No	

					travelers' minds.					
Marketing Support	VIC Funding/Staffing/Signage	Yes	This method may fund grants to Visit Visit Information Centers to help them maintain operations and/or pay for improvements (within the state rules and regulations including signage) so they can better meet the needs of Visit SEMT visitors.	Research conducted by the Montana Office of Tourism has shown that VICs are important and that it is vital to provide VICs and their staff with the tools and knowledge they need to provide a good experience to the visitor.	Success will be measured based on feedback from the VICs, which is gathered from first-hand experiences and signup information sheets which visitors complete.	A visitor's experience once they arrive in the region is vital in encouraging them to make a return trip. VIC's are the first place visitors go with problems or questions, and it is important to insure that they have the resources to maintain regular hours and to properly staff their visitor centers.		\$100.00	No	
Marketing Support	Joint Ventures	No	Visit Southeast Montana considers the Joint Ventures line item as a place in the budget to set aside funds for use on future, as of yet unknown, projects. These funds are specifically designated for use in joint marketing projects with state bed tax entities. These include CVBs, Regions and the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development.		We have found Joint Ventures with the MOTBD to be extremely effective in fulfilling our mission and marketing Visit Southeast Montana to the largest number of targeted potential visitors. We feel that by also participating in Joint Ventures with CVBs and Regions, we can further expand the success we've seen working with MOTBD. Collaboration simply makes sense.	Plans to measure success for projects utilizing Joint Venture funds will be made depending on the details of the project.		\$100.00	No	
Marketing Support	Cooperative Marketing	Yes	As previously stated, collaboration	Each organization which receives Cooperative Marketing Funds must	Most of the applicants for Cooperative	Plans to measure success for		\$100.00	No	

			<p>makes sense. In the past Visit Southeast Montana has offered Cooperative Marketing Grants to non-profit tourism related businesses throughout the region. Successful applicants must demonstrate that the project (for which funds are being requested) will benefit Visit Southeast Montana by increasing tourism to the region. All TAC regulations must be met in order for funding to be given.</p>	<p>provide research showing how the funds provided helped increase tourism to Visit Southeast Montana. Over the past several years, the research we've received has clearly shown that by providing funding for projects, we are indeed leveraging our tourism dollars in the most effective way possible</p>	<p>Marketing funds are from small communities attempting to increase tourism to their town. Often times they would be unable to move forward with their project without the matching grant funds we supply. By offering Cooperative Marketing funds, we are helping to improve Southeast Montana's tourism infrastructure and promotion of small events and communities in a way we could not if we were to undertake the projects alone.</p>	<p>projects utilizing Cooperative Marketing funds will be made depending on the details of the project. Typical measurements included increased attendance at events, increased paid admission to a facility or creation or improvement of a tourism entity.</p>			
Publicity	Social Media	Yes	<p>Funds in this segment support efforts in the social media realm including social media influencers, event promotions or "boosts" and other ways to enhance organic social media content throughout the region.</p>	<p>The year-long research project undertaken by SEMT, as well as up to date information collected from ITRR and Destination Analysts, Inc., support this project. Please see the Marketing Plan Narrative for information regarding SEMT Research.</p> <p>Research also shows that social media, including social media influencers, supports brand lift, places opportunities in front of followers and inspires "followers" to act. Nearly 70% of people would rather learn about products through good content. And 68% of consumers spend time reading blog content and</p>	<p>Social media continues to gain in popularity and markets. While the majority of content will be created and/or gathered in-house, we will sometimes contract with social influencers to supplement and gain access to different audiences.</p>	<p>Social media analytics will provide a solid measure of success as will increased attendance at promoted events or offerings.</p>	\$5,000.00		

				other content from a brand that they find interesting.						
Publicity	Fam Trips	Yes	<p>This method sets aside funds for familiarization tours through Southeast Montana for tour operators, journalists and photographers. It also includes promotional giveaways for welcome packets given to specific individuals or groups visiting the region plus includes a placeholder for film recruitment. These fam tours are often performed as a co-op with MOTBD.</p>	<p>The year-long research project undertaken by SEMT, as well as up to date information collected from ITRR and Destination Analysts, Inc., support this project. Please see the Marketing Plan Narrative for information regarding SEMT Research.</p> <p>Statistics have shown that international visitation to the United States and Montana in particular is increasing. Fam tours allow tour operator to personally experience the region, our "product" in a more intimate and influential situation.</p> <p>Research also shows that earned media, an article or video produced by a journalist, retains stronger media value than paid advertising.</p>	<p>Fam tours are an important method of educating potential tour operators to bring groups into SEMT. Operators rarely are willing to add an area to their product line unless they have experienced it personally. Competition with other states often means that regions such as ours must compete to bring operators to Visit Southeast Montana.</p> <p>Fam tours remain an important PR tool in that journalists can be provided with unique experiences. These experiences often result in articles being written by journalists in various publications which can be worth tens of thousands of dollars, if not more, in media impressions and credibility. Photographers are included in this group -- this inspirational component will be amplified.</p>	<p>Success will be measured based on tour operator bookings and articles written by hosted journalists.</p>		\$8,000.00	No	

Reg/CVB Required Documents

File Name	Description	File Size
Compliance Docs.pdf (763 KB)	Certificate of Compliance FY18 Application for Lodging Tax Revenue FY18 Pledge of Understanding and Compliance	763 KB
