



2016-2017

**MARKETING PLAN
AND BUDGET**

VisitBillings.com



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BOTTEGA



ESTABLISHMENT OF DESTINATION

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Visit Billings is to generate room nights for lodging facilities in the city of Billings by effectively marketing the region as a preferred travel destination.

The Visit Billings team is committed to growing visitation at Montana's Trailhead. The staff is an extension of its stakeholders (hoteliers) working to provide sales, services and marketing support to the local hospitality industry. Visit Billings is a leading brand comprised of the Billings Tourism Business Improvement District and the Billings Convention and Visitors Bureau and is managed by the Billings Chamber of Commerce.

Vision 2027 begins. Together with the Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) and Billings Chamber of Commerce/Convention and Visitors Bureau Boards, the Visit Billings team will continue to strategize with local leaders, community partners and stakeholders to ensure a solid foundation of success into the next decade while working in the here and now to surpass FY16 goals and objectives.

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As managed by the
Billings Chamber of
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BILLINGS IS “MONTANA’S CITY”

Shaped by the Yellowstone River and sheltered by the sandstone Rimrocks, Billings is a place of forever views and forever memories, where urban amenities and modern convenience meet the edge of the genuine frontier. Where the adventure of the untamed wilderness and history are out your front door.

Conveniently positioned in the region as the largest city between Calgary and Denver, Spokane and Minneapolis, Billings proudly serves a trade area of over 500,000 with diverse shopping, award-winning cuisine, arts and culture.

Warm genuine people take the time to welcome you and greet you with a smile. Unparalleled access to some of the most breathtaking and historic wonders in the United States including Yellowstone National Park, Beartooth Highway, Bighorn Canyon, Little Bighorn Battlefield, and Pompeys Pillar make Billings an idyllic destination for connecting to the best that Montana offers.

IN BILLINGS, MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD, ADVENTURES BEGIN DAILY.

ABOUT BILLINGS

Billings, population 109,059, is located in south-central Montana. The county seat of Yellowstone County and largest city in the state, “Montana’s City,” is the region’s economic hub. Major industries include agriculture, energy, healthcare, education and tourism.

Popular attractions include the walking brewery district in Historic Downtown Billings, Montana’s only zoo and botanical park, contemporary and western museums, several theaters, music venues, a state-of-the-art public library, and a countless number of outdoor community festivals.

The weather can range from over 100 degrees in the summer to below zero in the winter, offering ample opportunity for outdoor enthusiasts to experience all four seasons. More than 5,000 hotel rooms along with recreational, cultural and adventurous experiences, as well as numerous retail and restaurant offerings and several hundred thousand square feet of flexible meeting space are ready to accommodate any traveler’s needs and preferences.



BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

Best Sustainable Community Runner Up



It’s known as an oil and gas center, but Billings has a surprising green streak too. It’s established miles of bike paths, and its Trash Into Trees program has used recycling proceeds to plant more than 2,000 trees around town. More recently its new public library joined the ranks of notable LEED Platinum – certified Billings buildings. Population: 109,000 / Median Home Price: \$180,900

- Sunset Magazine, Feb. 2016 Issue

WHAT THEY’RE SAYING ABOUT BILLINGS

2016

- *Best Sustainable Community, Runner Up – Sunset Magazine*
- *Best Towns 2016 Finalist – Outside Magazine*

2015

- *Top 100 Best Place to Live – Livability*
- *Platinum Choice Award (PCA) as a Meeting and Convention Destination – Smart Meetings*
- *Reader’s Choice Award – Sports Destination Management Magazine*
- *Chamber of the Year – Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives*

2014

- *Top 10 Best Beer City – Livability*

2013

- *6th Greatest Place in the Nation to Live – Kiplinger*
- *26th Best Performing Small City (job & wage growth) Milliken Institute*
- *Top 25 Places to Retire – Forbes*
- *City with 6th Lowest Taxes – Office of Revenue Analysis, U.S. Government*

2011

- *Beartooth Highway ranked #1 Motorcycle Ride in the U.S. – American Motorcycle Association*
- *One of America’s Best Getaway Cities – Daily News Entertainment*

2010

- *Top 10 Cities with the Strongest Economy (#2) – Parenting*
- *Top 20 Greatest Places to Live in the West – American Cowboy*
- *Top 50 Most Bicycle Friendly Community in the U.S. (#37) – Bicycling Magazine*
- *Top 38 Cities for Unpolluted Air – State of the Air Report*
- *Top 83 Must See Cities in the West – Old West Destinations*



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tourism is woven into the fabric of Billings, Montana's Trailhead. The city is set in the heart of the region and on the outskirts of natural and historic wonders. As a destination, the community is vital to eastern Montana and northern Wyoming rural residents for essentials and entertainment, but Billings is also on the maps and the bucket lists of worldwide travelers. However, tourism, as an industry, is much more than just inspiring people to stop in Billings and accommodating their stay.

Travel promotion is a wise, strategic investment for Billings. It kicks off the Virtuous Cycle (U.S. Travel Association). This cycle begins with travel marketing and leads to increased visitation, greater traveler spending in local businesses and faster job creation; all of which far surpass the initial marketing investment from a Destination Management Organization or DMO, like Visit Billings.

In Yellowstone County, non-Montana residents spent \$397 million dollars in 2014 (source: Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research). The area is third on the list behind Flathead and Gallatin Counties. The Virtuous Cycle sums it up well when focusing on Yellowstone County: Visit Billings strategic travel marketing and promotion leads to increased visitor trips. Increased visitor trips equate to local economic growth due to visitor expenditures and then workforce expansion. Therefore, travel promotion for Billings directly impacts the local economy, business development, strengthens the quality of life for residents, assists with community revitalization like

the Yellowstone Kelly Interpretive Site and, in many ways, helps build a competitive edge over other destinations.

In today's highly competitive travel market, states and cities that maintain, or even increase funding, for travel promotion programs, seize market share, while those that cut programs suffer immediate revenue shortfalls and other negative economic consequences.

The economic benefit of travel to Billings is clear.

Visit Billings fiscal year 2017 strategies will work to foster the tourism industry. The Official Visit Billings Marketing Plan and Budget document acts as a roadmap for the year ahead. It will help align leadership, stakeholders, team members, and the community for the benefit of the industry and economy.

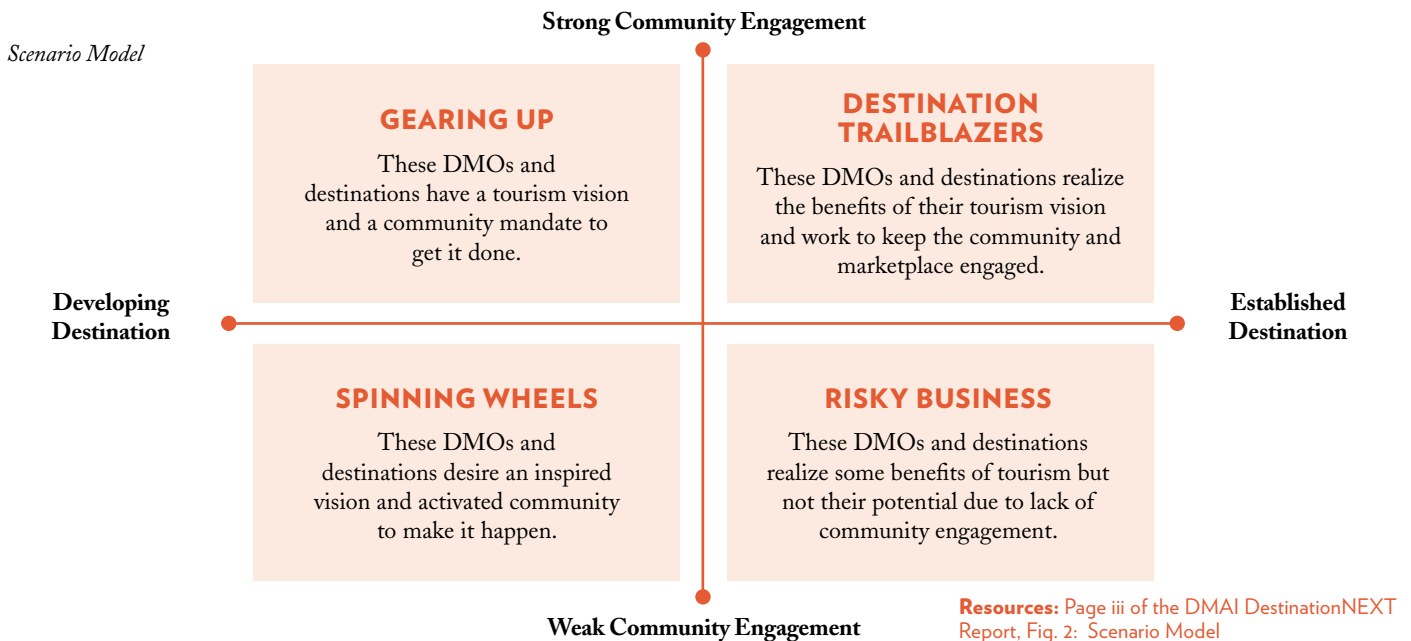
This year, Visit Billings begins Vision 2027. A strategic planning effort that encompasses growing visitation at Montana's Trailhead, while making sure funding, research, projects and opportunities that will strengthen Billings in the decade to come, are identified.

Simultaneously, the Visit Billings team will continue to serve and respond to the needs of stakeholders by creating new, and enhancing current, marketing initiatives to promote the destination for recruitment in all specialized segments including leisure, meetings and conventions and sports.

BILLINGS - FUTURE AS A DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATION (DMO)

More than two million people visit Billings every year, yet residents and business owners, including owners of restaurants and retailers, whom receive the most tourism revenue of all industries affected by visitors (ITRR), still doubt the legitimacy of the industry and its local economic impact. Together, with our community partners like the Chamber of Commerce, Visit Southeast Montana, Downtown Billings Association and Big Sky Economic Development, we are Destination Trailblazers. But, potential growth diminishes when

business owners and even stakeholders, don't realize the benefits of investing in the community, facilities, infrastructure, beautification projects, events and visitor experiences. Taking the industry for granted or being complacent in any tourism-based capacity, puts the destination at risk. Billings is doing well. The potential to evolve into a top tier destination makes the industry highly significant. Vision 2027 will assist Visit Billings and community partners with a roadmap to prepare for the next ten years.



VISIT BILLINGS FUNDING

Visit Billings is funded primarily through the Billings Tourism Business Improvement District (BTBID) and through a portion of the State Lodging Facility Use Tax.

The BTBID assesses \$2.00 per occupied room night on all hotels and motels in the city of Billings with six (6) or more sleeping rooms. The BTBID funds stay local for promotion of tourism in and around Billings to support and grow business opportunities for the destination and its stakeholders.

Additionally, there are two Montana taxes imposed on users of an overnight lodging facility (such as a hotel, motel, campground, dude ranch, and guest ranch) which are collected by the facility and remitted to the Montana Department of Revenue. These two taxes are a 4% Lodging Facility Use, and a 3% Lodging Facility Sales, for a combined 7% lodging tax. The Lodging Facility Sales Tax (3%) is deposited into the State's General Fund. The Lodging Facility Use Tax (4%) is allocated to the Department of Commerce for tourism promotion on the state and local levels including Montana's Tourism Regions and Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVBs), like the Billings CVB.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS/ VISIT BILLINGS WINS

GWRRA WING DING 38

Visit Billings is proud to announce that Montana's Trailhead will host one of the largest motorcycle rallies in the nation in the summer of 2016. Honda Gold Wing Road Riders Association (GWRRA) members will converge on Billings for the official rally dates of August 31st through September 3rd, 2016. 10,000 riders will enjoy Billings and the surrounding region during Wing Ding 38.

In September of 2015, Visit Billings staff and members of the Billings Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) Board secretly traveled to Huntsville, Alabama to officially 'reveal' the 2016 destination to Wing Ding 37 attendees. GWRRA members were ecstatic to be returning to Billings and southeast Montana having enjoyed their previous visits in 1997, 2000 and 2007.

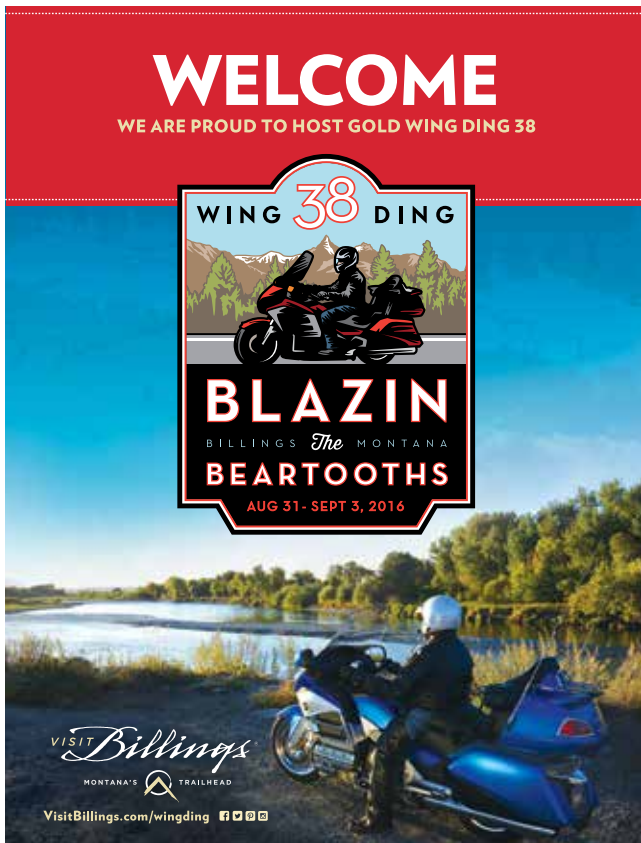
For several years, Visit Billings staff had tried to inspire GWRRA to choose Billings as a Wing Ding host city again, but Billings didn't have enough hotel rooms to accommodate their growing convention attendance or the proper financial resources. Now, with more than 800

new sleeping rooms available in Billings, strong lodging options in surrounding towns, and financial support from the Billings Tourism Business Improvement District, Wing Ding 38 will be hosted at Montana's Trailhead on MetraPark grounds.

The Labor Day weekend event will have a huge multi-million dollar impact on the local economy. Wing Ding 38 will begin with a welcome party downtown on Tuesday, August 30th and the rally will run through Saturday, September 3rd. The impact of the riders to the region will be felt prior to and after the rally as they explore Montana.

Billings successfully hosted the BMW MOA International Motorcycle Rally in July 2015. The economic impact on the community was nearly five million dollars for the three day Rally. Wing Ding 38 will attract nearly twice the attendance for the four day event. The Visit Billings team is working closely with Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Billings Alliance colleagues to again engage the business community (similar to preparation for BMW MOA) to prepare them for the influx of visitors to the community.

Wing Dingers will decorate their bikes to show off the luxury rides to the community during their light parade and will particularly enjoy all of Billings' ice cream shops.



BMW MOA RALLY

In July of 2015, the Billings community successfully hosted the 2015 BMW MOA International Rally. Nearly 6,000 riders traveled to Billings for this city-wide convention that impacted the business community and were an amazing group to have in the city.

Not only do major events like the BMW MOA Rally fill Billings' hotels, but they also fill restaurants, retailers and area attractions. The Rally, hosted on MetraPark grounds, allowed Visit Billings another opportunity to work and engage the business community by pointing out the importance of exceptional service to visitors. Local business efforts in hosting convention type visitors will help to further repeat visitation efforts. The team accomplished local business engagement via media communications and a landing page at VisitBillings.com. The goal of the engagement pieces offered was to provide tools and foster business community advocacy. The informative landing page tool-kit offered logos, FAQ's and a downloadable poster that were readily available and supported the placed print advertisements in publications geared toward amassing community support. Other actions taken to assist with the success of the event included an expanded Trailhead Tourism Ambassador session, strategically placed welcome flags and billboard creative along city streets, a major welcoming event in downtown Billings and mobile Visitor Information Center on the Rally site.

The Visit Billings team looks forward to attracting BMW MOA for an encore Rally in future years. They were an incredible group to work with.



BORDER WAR

From 1993 to 2006, Billings hosted the action packed men's basketball battle between the Montana State University Bobcats and the University of Wyoming Cowboys, during the First Interstate Bank Border War. The showcase event was on hiatus for nearly a decade, but enthusiastic UW and MSU Alumni, together with Visit Billings, fought to bring the standoff back to Billings in November of 2015. It was a huge success. The caliber of play witnessed on the court at Rimrock Auto Arena was beyond entertaining. Attendance was strong and fans were gracious to see this match-up back in Billings. Game day featured tailgating, hospitality functions, music, cheerleading and true rivalry.

The Visit Billings team looks forward to fostering this event with the local planning committee and watching it become a major November event for the destination.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS/ VISIT BILLINGS WINS

406 DUATHLON CHALLENGE

Visit Billings is excited to assist the organizers with 406 Race Series as they bring the inaugural 406 Duathlon Challenge to Billings in the spring of 2016. As the marketing states, it's a bike race, foot race, and physical challenge that is ideal for the elite athlete or family. Race events like the 406 Challenge help position Billings as a sports events hub and continue to grow the community into a road race destination.



OUTDOOR WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

The Outdoor Writers Association of America (OWAA) officials will hold their annual national conference at Montana's Trailhead in the summer of 2016. The event will be held July 16–18 and will include three jam-packed days of education sessions, outdoor product demo days, tours and more. More than 200 outdoor journalists are expected to attend.

Visit Billings, the Billings Chamber of Commerce and Visit Southeast Montana were instrumental in securing Billings as the host community for this conference in 2013. Pre and post conference trips include multiple local highlights such as biking the Rimrocks, fishing the Yellowstone and Bighorn Rivers, hiking, exploring natural and historic sites and touring local breweries and distilleries. This is an incredible opportunity to showcase Billings and southeast Montana.

NCAA DII CROSS COUNTRY REGION CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Visit Billings team, together with Montana State University Billings officials, are proud to have the opportunity to host the 2016 NCAA DII Cross Country Region Championships in November. The event was held in Billings in November of 2014 as part of a successful NCAA bid executed by former Billings Sports Consultant Chris Frye, who worked with MSU Billings Cross Country Coach Dave Coppock and other local sports leaders to submit the 'Choose Billings' proposal.

Like the 2014 competition, the event will be hosted at Amend Park in Billings. Thirty men's and women's NCAA DII Cross Country teams, from all over the western United States, will travel to Billings to participate. Such events continue to prove that Billings is the trailhead to trophy celebrations. The Visit Billings team will once again team up with lodging partners and other business community members to adopt teams. This Adopt-a-Team program ensures that athletes feel welcome and are primed to succeed in their competition.

STRENGTHS

ACCESSIBILITY TO UNSPOILED NATURE

- The most scenic entrance to **Yellowstone National Park** is via the **Beartooth Highway** which is a **National Scenic Byway and All-American Road**, 60 minutes from Billings
 - › **Red Lodge** – 60 miles
 - › **Beartooth Highway** – 65 miles
 - › **Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness Mountains** – 60 miles
 - › **Yellowstone National Park** NE entrance at Cooke-City/Silver Gate (summer access via vehicle; winter access via snowmobile) – 140 miles
- The only physical evidence along the Lewis and Clark Expedition is located at **Pompeys Pillar**, 30 miles from Billings
- Native American Culture
 - › **Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument** – 60 miles
 - › **Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area** – 85 miles
 - › **Crow Fair** at Crow Agency (June) – 80 miles
 - › **Chief Plenty Coups State Park** – 35 miles
- Local attractions right in Billings
 - › Rare, sandstone Rimrocks define the city and offer an unexpected backdrop and vantage points of the horizon
 - › Walking, hiking and biking trails right in Billings
 - › The longest free flowing river in the lower 48, Yellowstone River, runs just south of town
 - › **Pictograph Cave State Park** – 7 miles

VIBRANT COMMUNITY APPEAL / ARTS & CULTURE

- Historic Downtown Billings and Montana's only Walking Brewery District which includes six breweries and two distilleries
- Museums serving contemporary to western tastes
 - › Yellowstone Art Museum
 - › Western Heritage Center
 - › Yellowstone County Museum
- Lively music, theater and nightlife scene - Magic City Blues, Alberta Bair Theatre and MontanaFair
- Flavors of all kinds including Farm to Table offerings
- New State-of-the-Art Library
- Shopping ranging from specialty boutiques to name brand retailers like Scheels at Shiloh Crossing

ACCOMMODATIONS & FACILITIES

- More than 5,000 hotel rooms in 50+ different hotels ranging from brand name chains to local historic properties
- 360,000 square feet of flexible meeting space
- 10,000 seat arena
- Numerous unique meeting settings including the Historic Billings Depot

AIRPORT

- Billing Logan Airport serves nine (9) cities directly with major airlines Delta, United, Alaska and Allegiant.
- Cape Air serves northeast Montana with several daily intrastate flights.
- **Non-stop** flights are offered daily, weekly and seasonally.
 1. Seattle (daily)
 2. Salt Lake City (daily)
 3. Denver (daily)
 4. Minneapolis/St. Paul (daily)
 5. Portland (weekly)
 6. Las Vegas (weekly)
 7. Phoenix (weekly)
 8. Los Angeles (seasonal)
 9. Chicago (seasonal)



SPORTS DESTINATION

- Billings offers several sports teams to delight and entertain visitors and locals
 - › **Billings Wolves Indoor Football** - Rimrock Auto Arena at MetraPark
 - › **Billings Mustangs Baseball** - rookie affiliate team to the Cincinnati Reds home games June-Sept – Dehler Park
 - › **Billings Bulls Hockey** - action packed season is played Oct-Feb at Centennial Ice Arena
- Community wide events attract athletes from all over the country
 - › Big Sky State Games - region's largest Olympic style state games
 - › Montana Marathon (Boston Marathon qualifier)
 - › Montana Women's Run
 - › Heart & Sole Run (5k regional qualifier)
 - › 406 Duathlon Challenge
 - › Montana Warrior Run

- Sporting venues allow Billings to position itself as a contender in vying for tournaments and competitions
 - › Dehler Park \$12 million renovated multi-use baseball stadium
 - › Amend Park soccer, lacrosse and cross country fields
 - › Billings SportsPlex indoor soccer and football field
 - › MetraPark Grounds
 - › Two universities and four high-schools with full sports facilities

STRONG ECONOMY & BUSINESS CLIMATE

- Medical - two nationally renowned hospitals including one Mayo Clinic Partner
- Oil & Gas
- Booming and supportive local business climate
- Partnership with Chamber of Commerce strengthens community ties
- Strong agricultural support for state



OPPORTUNITIES

AIRPORT

- Billings Logan Airport, though offering consistent and strong air capacity, is perceived as not keeping pace with necessary and/or potential growth as compared to other Montana destinations. Billings has lost market share in the form of deplanements to Bozeman, a primarily leisure destination (Billings is primarily a business destination) with Big Sky Ski & Summer Resort a short 45 minute drive south. However, if Billings continues to lose market share to other Montana communities, it will equate to an immeasurable loss of tax and tourism dollars.
- In many cases, flights are more expensive and itineraries are more inconvenient than competitive cities. This is a major concern. Logan statistics state that, on average, airfare into Billings is \$40 more than Bozeman. However, as a primary leisure destination with more flight options, even some residents state that it can be easier and less expensive to fly into and out of Bozeman or even, Sheridan, Wyoming.
- First impression and services are lacking – “vending machines and plastic plants are its defining features” (Billings Gazette Opinion - 3/24/2015).

GROUND TRANSPORTATION

- Taxicab services are not consistently available and often times are offered in a shuttle format meaning a rider may share the cab with other riders taking longer to get to a store, restaurant or attraction.
- During the 2015 Session of the Montana Legislature, proposed revision of “transportation for hire” regulation was passed and signed by the governor. The passing of Senate Bill 396 will advance Montana toward allowing healthy competition and more ride share offerings like Uber, Lyft and Sidecar.

NOTHING TO DO

- There is an ongoing perception or stigma that there can be nothing to do in Billings. This is beginning to change, but there is much work and brand lift to invest in to changing such a mindset.

CONVENTION FACILITIES

- Billings offers no State-of-the-Art, structured, large-capacity convention center on a campus setting.
- Existing facilities are spread throughout the city and research has found some to be either dated or not in convenient locations, i.e. close proximity to shops, restaurants and points of interest.

WALKING EXPERIENCES/GATHERING AREAS

- With a Walk Score of 35, Billings lacks ample walking/shopping/gathering areas (WalkScore.com). Downtown offers a vibrant experience, trails are improving and outdoor shopping venues like

Shiloh Crossing and the West Park Promenade are helping, but there are few other offerings that encourage guests to explore town.

- Assisting the destination as it evolves into a community with a strong trail system, including the Marathon Loop, are the Chamber of Commerce’s Trails Committee and Billings TrailNet. Both organizations have a robust volunteer base, City and County support and strategies to help strengthen walkability in Billings.

SMALL TOWN DESIGNATION

- Billings is a vibrant community and the largest in the state, however, it is not small and charming per the MOTBD brand pillars. Working in harmony with Southeast Montana, but setting Billings apart as more of an anchor in the region, is an ongoing challenge.

AESTHETICS/PRIDE IN COMMUNITY

- Entering Billings via Interstate 90 is especially dreary at nearly half of the city’s exits – with refineries and other industrial activities sprawled all over the place (Randall Travel Marketing, 2010).
- The exits and Interstate 90 borders against Billings’ industrial businesses need improvement in some cases, like berms that can be more appealing and enticing for visitors contemplating a stopover.

CHALLENGES

- Convention Center – push back from a majority of lodging partners has slowed progress and could impact the Meetings and Convention segment.
- A new convention center in any Montana city could steal market share from Billings. The Meetings and Conventions segment makes up 24% of the tourism industry (Randall Travel Marketing, 2010).
- Wyoming positions itself consistently as offering “a more desirable entrance to Yellowstone National Park” via Cody and more scenic means of traveling the west from Mount Rushmore instead of taking the Warrior Trail in southeast Montana. Visit Billings is working to put measures in place to entice travelers to route north through Montana into Billings instead.
- Bakken economy slow down due to falling oil prices.
- Billings is a strong sports destination with the potential to recruit significantly more youth, collegiate and amateur events if sports facility offerings were expanded.
- Ongoing flux in the Canadian exchange rate directly impacts the viability of this market.

MOTBD BRAND PILLAR ALIGNMENT

Visit Billings is committed to keeping Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development's (MOTBD) key brand pillars front-of-mind in all marketing efforts to present a holistic Montana experience to visitors. There are many ways the MOTBD 2013-17 plan speaks to Billings as a destination. In other instances, Billings will seek to position itself as a valuable contributor to the state's tourism efforts as some elements of the MOTBD strategy are difficult to adorn onto Montana's largest city. As Montana's largest and most urban community, it can be difficult for Visit Billings to 'fit' Billings into the MOTBD mindset at all times.

STRATEGY 1

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

Billings is coined "Montana's Trailhead" due largely in part to its favorable positioning in the region. Drive one hour in any direction from Billings and you're offered access to iconic attractions like Pompeys Pillar, Bighorn Canyon, Little Bighorn Battlefield and Beartooth Highway.

In the heart of the city, Billings is framed by the remarkable sandstone Rimrocks, and the Yellowstone River sits just to the south of town. Dozens of miles of multi-use trails and bike lanes wind in and around the city with a 26-mile marathon loop nearing completion. Swords Rimrock Park Trail, overlooking the city of Billings, was named Montana Trail of the Year by the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department. At Swords Rimrock Park sits Yellowstone Kelly's Gravesite. Full of history, but lacking in access, the Billings Chamber is spearheading a major renovation of the site scheduled to break ground in Fall of 2017 so residents and visitors can enjoy real and tangible history, the story of Yellowstone Kelly.

From Billings, visitors can see six mountain ranges – the Bighorns, Pryors, Beartooths, Crazyes, Big Snowies and Bull Mountains.

Visit Billings communicates incredible access to unspoiled nature with inspiring imagery and motivating content, from the Yellowstone River to the Rimrocks and all trailhead access to state and national parks/destinations.

STRATEGY 2

HIGHLIGHT AND HELP DEVELOP VIBRANT AND CHARMING SMALL TOWNS THROUGHOUT MONTANA.

As the largest community between Calgary and Denver, Spokane and Minneapolis, Billings is a vibrant community with access to small towns via Visit Southeast Montana and Yellowstone Country. Billings may boast big city amenities, but it does offer a truly small town feel. Billings offers travelers a destination for shopping, nightlife, dining, accommodations and culture – on the edge of the genuine frontier and near small-town Montana.

Equally as important to the visitor, in Billings the warm hardworking people possess a perspective that is uniquely Montanan and inherently individual. Billings' residents look you in the eye and take the time to make you feel welcome. After a good night's sleep and hearty breakfast, the good folks of Billings are happy to direct visitors toward epic day trips and points of interest in neighboring regions.

STRATEGY 3

INTEGRATE NATURE AND TOWNS TO OFFER AND DELIVER A BALANCE OF "BREATHTAKING EXPERIENCES" AND "RELAXING HOSPITALITY."

Whether visitors seek adrenaline pumping adventure or easy paced experiences, Billings is the perfect place to set up home base. With more than 5,000 hotel rooms, a wide variety of local attractions, and access to breathtaking views and Montana icons, Billings will surprise and delight visitors from all walks of life.









TRAVEL DECISION PROCESS

THREE PHASES: INSPIRE, ORIENT, FACILITATE

Visit Billings plans to address the three phases of the travel decision process in the following ways:

THE INSPIRATION PHASE 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 (MOTBD), which uses Montana's key tourism pillars to inspire millions of potential visitors to visit the state each year.

- Billings is well situated between the historic landmarks of Southeast Montana, and the awe-inspiring landscapes of Yellowstone Country. Working in tandem with MOTBD efforts, Visit Billings will continue to leverage stunning imagery, inspiring, targeted messaging, and compelling calls to action in marketing materials. Headlines include "Gateway to Breathtaking," and "Trailhead to Genuine Frontier."
- For the national audience, Visit Billings will seek to inspire travelers to include Billings on their itinerary as an urban waypoint worth staying an extra night (or two) for.
- Regionally, Billings itself offers a vacation destination to many neighboring communities. Ongoing "weekender" campaigns will inspire and invite a driving audience to explore and enjoy all that Billings has to offer.
- The air service map was expanded to a dedicated "Get Here" page. This page now includes not only the map showcasing routes into Billings from feeder markets but also flight booking options and special Stay & Fly room rates. The Walking Brewery District map is under development as it expands to become a dedicated landing page with interactive information, as well as the downloadable map. A comprehensive hotels map is downloadable from the website to further orient guests on where Billings is situated in the state, and where points of interest and facilities are located within the city.
- The Billings Guidebook is available digitally via the website, and also mailed upon request. The Visit Billings team is committed to responding to web and phone inquiries promptly.

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

- All Visit Billings marketing materials direct prospective travelers to a comprehensive website, VisitBillings.com. The site is maintained regularly and provides in-depth information, maps, guides, suggested itineraries and must-sees in Billings and the area. The easy-to-navigate data is cataloged so any demographic group can find what suits their tastes and needs. As a 2016-2017 initiative, the homepage is undergoing a refresh in order to develop a more compelling way to draw visitors further into the site. Efforts will be made to draw more "at-a-glance" textual content toward the top of the screen, and lessen the impact of the large slider images on page loading.
- In 2016 the digital Itinerary Builder, originally created in 2014 to further assist travelers in shaping their custom "bucket list" experience, was adapted to improve functionality. Renamed the Mega Map, the navigation uses the same prime real estate on the right end of the navigation bar. The page itself lost the cart and "builder" functionality to make more room for the actual map. Lodging elements were added to the map, and a search feature was added to the interface. This re-branding was done to allow visitors to find and interact with this powerful tool on the site more easily.
- The **FACILITATION PHASE** is where the traveler seeks 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 travel into manageable daily distances.
- Billings Visitor Information Center (VIC) is managed by Visit Billings and housed on the main floor of the Chamber building. Nearly thirty part-time volunteers operate the center, which is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The VIC is complete with brochures, maps, guides and retail offerings. The VIC space is currently being re-branded to reflect the current look and feel and offering visitors a consistent experience at each touchpoint. The team is welcoming, knowledgeable, and on-the-ready in order to facilitate visitor queries, and to assist with successful stays and future Montana travels.
- Further, the Visit Billings staff keeps an open dialogue of communication and information flow with tourism partners, area hotels, attractions, businesses, and the community in preparation to provide exceptional customer service to expected visitors. This service initiative is spearheaded by the Trailhead Tourism Ambassador (TTA) Program, who's mission it is to unite and motivate the Billings community in raising the bar and level of service. It provides boots-on-the-ground training and support to frontline stakeholders.
- Visit Billings has solidified a presence in social media and continues to foster connectivity within different platforms by offering visitors current and relevant content via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube. Visitors can engage with the #VisitBillings brand while they are on their journey, further enhancing the experience.



WALKING BREWERY DISTRICT

Billings, Montana's Trailhead, has the only self-guided, walkable brewery tour in Montana. This unofficial "brewery district" is located downtown and includes six breweries and two distilleries, all within easy walking distance. Take this 1.5-mile brewery route and enjoy some historic points along the way.

Yellowstone Valley Brewing Co.

2123 1st Ave N # B

Your first stop is a brewery and distillery in one, with open mic nights and live music often. Enjoy a handcrafted Yellowstone brew-Grizzly Wulff Wheat, Wild Fly Ale, Renegade Red Ale, Hucklewizen and Black Widow Oatmeal Stout. Or, enjoy homemade vodka and gin in their distillery tasting room.

Skypoint

If you feel like exploring a little more after dinner, head north half a block and look up to see Billings Skypoint. You have now reached the center of downtown Billings. Many events take place here on evenings and weekends.

Montana Brewing Co.

113 N 28th St

Your last stop is at Montana Brewing Company. If you're hungry, enjoy some dinner and try Custer's Last Stout for dessert. They're open late, so no rush when you're here.

Thirsty Street Brewing Co.

3008 1st Ave N

Thirsty Street Brewing Co. offers 6 fresh, full flavored beers on tap, including a Belgian Blonde and Belgian Dubbel, along with Montana made hot dogs and sausages. A game room with pool, shuffleboard, darts, and big screen TV will keep you entertained!

Angry Hank's

20 N 30th St

Enjoy one of Angry Hank's 8 ales on tap, including Anger Management Belgian-style Wheat, Angry Hank's Blonde, Street Fight Imperial Red, Dog Slobber Brown, Head Trauma IPA as well as seasonal beers.

You'll love the new location with outdoor patio seating. Try a new brew and munch on some popcorn and hot sauce while you're here.

MONTANA MICROBREWERIES ARE TYPICALLY OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FROM 4 - 8 P.M. TUESDAY THROUGH SATURDAY, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED HERE. VISIT BILLINGS IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR CHANGES IN HOURS OR BREW AVAILABILITY. PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY. VISIT BILLINGS IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTIONS TAKEN BY INDIVIDUALS USING THIS TOUR.

Park Two Garage

2651 1st Ave N

Park your car and start your brewery tour from here.

Western Heritage Center

2822 Montana Ave

Before you head to Angry Hank's, stop by the Western Heritage Center to get your history fix. The building is located to your left as you head west along Montana Ave.

The center is an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution and is housed in the historic Parmly Billings Memorial Library building, built in 1901. View artifacts and learn some Billings history before your next stop.

Carter's Brewing

2526 Montana Ave

Carter's has several handcrafted beers to choose from, including their Coldwater Kolsch, De-Railed India Pale Ale, Black Magic Porter, Farmhouse Ale, StationMaster Pale Ale and Boxcar Brown Ale.

Trailhead Spirits

2314 Montana Ave

Stop at Trailhead Spirits for a taste of their award-winning Montana made and hand-crafted gin and vodka, and introducing small batch whiskey. Check out their merchandise for a souvenir flask or trademark copper mug.

Überbrew

2305 Montana Avenue

Überbrew offers a full menu, so stop here for an appetizer and a drink before you head out.

Billings Depot, Inc.

2310 Montana Ave

When you leave Überbrew and head toward Trailhead Spirits, make sure and check out the Historic Billings Depot. The distillery is housed in part of this historic landmark that was built in 1909 to service three major railroad companies. The waiting area and baggage rooms of the Depot are restored and preserved as historical places. Enjoy some sunshine in the Depot outdoor garden before heading into Trailhead Spirits for some house-made gin and vodka.

Walking Brewery District



SOCIAL PURCHASE PATH

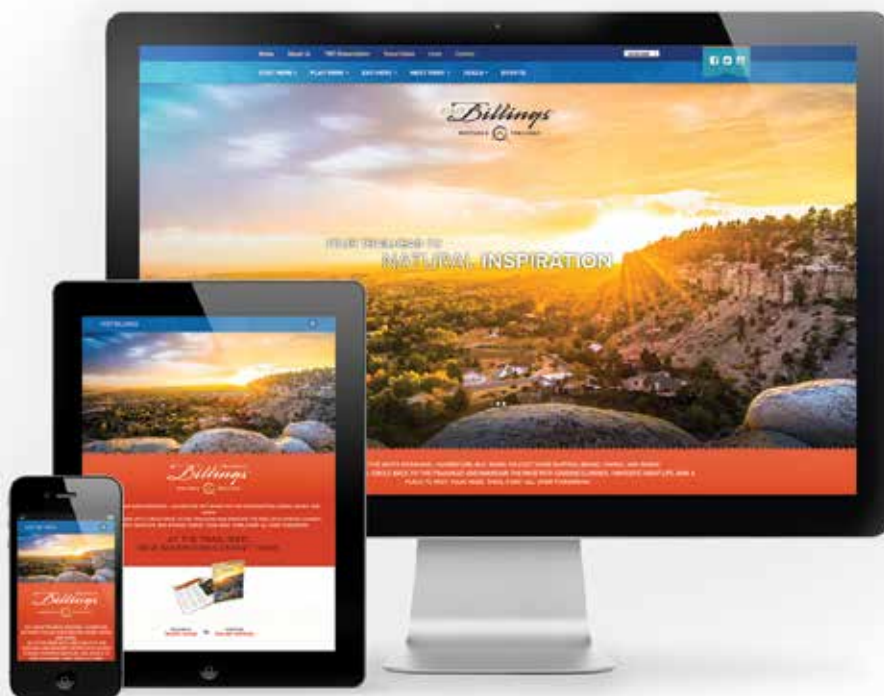
The traditional purchase funnel continues to evolve. Digital technology has created a multitude of touch points and in turn opportunities for consumers to interact and engage with brands throughout all stages of the purchase path. The travel industry has been revolutionized by social media as multiple platforms deliver a truly “in-person” experience. According to Social Media Today, 84% of Facebook users admitted in a PRSA Travel & Tourism poll that viewing their friends’ post actually influenced their own future travel plans and 51% claim Twitter content influenced consideration of a travel brand.

Consumers are uniting with one another, sharing experiences, blogging, posting and reviewing-socially influencing friends, family and followers throughout their journey. Social Media Today also reports 97 percent of millennials are now using social networks while traveling. This feedback informs potential purchasers and influences their decisions. First impressions are always important and in today’s purchase path they’re

very likely to come from current users-planting seed and potentially streamlining the purchase path for new users.

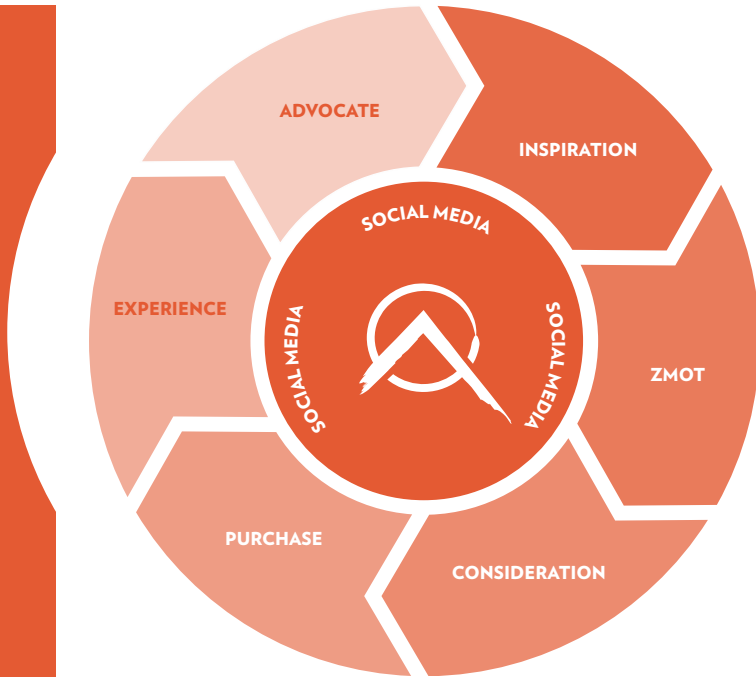
With an estimated 35% of online travel bookings made via a mobile device by 2018, the expectation of a comprehensive, seamless experience when booking travel plans continues to grow. Keeping in mind it can take 80-plus days for the average consumer to make just two travel decisions, the number of touch points on all avenues presented to that consumer become critical. The early moments in the decision-making process where consumers do online research before making a purchase remain an important piece of the Visit Billings travel brand, however touch points along the entire purchase funnel continuously engaging the consumer in the true experience of Billings are essential.

In 2016-17, Visit Billings will continue a commitment to engage consumers with compelling branded content in all stages of the social purchase path.



“WE HAVE TECHNOLOGY, FINALLY, THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HUMAN HISTORY ALLOWS PEOPLE TO REALLY MAINTAIN RICH CONNECTIONS WITH MUCH LARGER NUMBERS OF PEOPLE.”

- Pierre Omidyar, founder, eBay



- **INSPIRATION / AWARENESS**
Idea enters, seed planted, discussion begins
- **ZERO MOMENT OF TRUTH**
Research begins
- **CONSIDER / PLAN / SEARCH**
- **PURCHASE / BOOK TRIP**
- **EXPERIENCE**
Foster brand loyalty by creating experiences that resonate with visitors
- **ADVOCATE / SHARE**
Convert visitors to “brand ambassadors”







**TARGET
MARKETS**

LEISURE – REGIONAL

Billings' leisure market consists of a healthy balance of history on the genuine frontier, outdoor adventure and recreation, and urban amenities. As the largest city in the region, Billings offers amenities and opportunities regional visitors expect from the destination (medical, shopping, education, etc.). However, Visit Billings is striving to be sure visitors expectations are expanded so that all visitors, regardless of where they come here from, see Billings as the trailhead to the many iconic attractions and experiences offered.

Non-resident travelers spend \$374 million annually in Yellowstone County – a more than significant amount of economic impact. Leisure, though a much less trackable form of travel, has a huge influence on that bottom line. The overall goal of the 2016-17 leisure marketing strategy is to expand year round leisure visitation and grow room nights in Montana's Trailhead.

Simultaneously, Visit Billings will continue to focus on value season growth (October – April), particularly on an intrastate and regional marketing level. Value season campaigns will serve up the many reasons to visit Billings as *the* urban destination in the region. Additionally, specific campaigns will run to promote niche reasons to visit (i.e.: competitive runs, concert craze, etc.)

DEMOGRAPHIC

- The target is primarily women 30 – 60, along with their companions and families, residing between 140-300 miles driving distance to Billings. She lives far enough away from Billings that a stay-over is preferred, but close enough that Billings is more convenient than competitive destinations like Denver, Spokane, Calgary – even Rapid City and Bismarck. Media placements will vary per campaign to further narrow the reach, depending on campaign target and creative.

GEOGRAPHIC

- The regional marketing focuses by and large on central and eastern Montana, and extends into northern Wyoming and western North Dakota. Depending on the campaign concept, local event schedule, and even weather, marketing efforts may include southern Canada, South Dakota and communities in closer proximity to Billings, like Bozeman and Lewistown.

PSYCHOGRAPHIC

- The regional drive audience is interested in shopping, events and dining. They view Billings as a cosmopolitan city that offers much more than their home communities.

MONTANA

1. Havre (248 miles)
2. Glasgow (277 miles)
3. Sidney (269 miles)
4. Glendive (219 miles)
5. Miles City (146 miles)
6. Great Falls (217 miles)
7. Helena (239 miles)
8. Butte (228 miles)
9. Bozeman (142 miles)
10. Lewistown (125 miles)

WYOMING

1. Cody (106 miles)
2. Sheridan (131 miles)
3. Buffalo (165 miles)
4. Gillette (234 miles)





NORTH DAKOTA*

The primary focus for the Dakotas is the Northwest Bakken basin. Although a slightly longer driving distance, **Williston** (315 miles) and **Dickinson** (316 miles) continue to be a lucrative draw for Billings. Bismarck (413 miles), population 123,000, will also be included on a case-by-case basis.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Rapid City (316 miles), the “Gateway to the Black Hills,” serves road trippers traveling west, and offers good visibility for enticing visitors to include Billings in their summer plans. Efforts here will expand beyond campaign specific promotion to entice visitors to consider the Warrior Trail and the Beartooth Highway as viable travel options. Billboard messaging between Rapid City and Cody, WY will be utilized to better position Billings as a competitive and viable destination. This market is included on a case-by-case basis.

CANADA*

Lethbridge (405 miles) will be considered when campaign appropriate. Visit Billings will orient this market with “reasons to visit” that help Billings to stand out among neighboring competition.

** Ongoing flux in the energy industry and the Canadian exchange rate directly impact the viability of these markets. Considerations will be made to examine these factors before making placements in these areas.*



LEISURE – NATIONAL

National marketing will occur most heavily in the spring with a call to action to use Billings as a Gateway to Yellowstone National Park for the high season ahead. The national placements will include an emphasis on Billings itself and why the destination holds value on its own, as well as its trailhead offerings. Work will continue to be done in Minnesota to build off of the FY15 MSP Airport Takeover. Potential additions to this effort include Denver and Dallas. Additionally, Visit Billings will seek to install a takeover in Seattle, WA reminiscent of FY15’s work in MSP. Seattle is a primary market choice because of its position as a national hub and gateway for many international arrivals, doubling the impact of the installation.

DEMOGRAPHIC

- The target audience is primarily family decision makers 30-60. She is a Millennial or Gen X'er influenced by her Gen We children. She is a Boomer with disposable income and a desire to explore.

GEOGRAPHIC

- Key markets include cities offering non-stop flights to Billings, Montana
 - › Denver, SLC, MSP, Seattle mainly
 - › Potential Dallas flight



BUSIEST DOMESTIC ROUTES FROM BILLINGS (FEB 2015 TO JAN 2016)*

RANK	AIRPORT	PASSENGERS	CARRIERS
1	Denver, CO	122,000	United
2	Salt Lake City, UT	82,000	Delta
3	Minneapolis/St Paul, MN	82,000	Delta
4	Seattle, WA	53,000	Alaska
5	Portland, OR	18,000	Alaska
6	Phoenix-Mesa, AZ	17,000	Allegiant
7	Las Vegas, NV	17,000	Allegiant
8	Sidney, MT	9,000	Cape Air
9	Wolf Point, MT	4,000	Cape Air
10	Glasgow, MT	4,000	Cape Air

*Bureau of Transportation Statistics



PSYCHOGRAPHIC

- She is a road-tripper, travel enthusiast, National Parks and history buff.

CONSUMER SEGMENTS

BOOMERS

- Boomers have the travel bug, big time. In 2016, the 50+ set is planning to take an average of four or five leisure trips by land, sea or air, according to an AARP travel trends survey (Hospitality-Industry.com, 24 November 2015). They express wanderlust for bucket-list adventures.

MILLENNIALS

- For Millennials on the other hand, they seek to break free from itinerary-led, bucket-list plans and make room for spontaneity giving way to social media bragging rights. They are motivated by an honest desire to feed their curiosity for cultural learning. Six out of 10 Millennials would rather spend their money on experiences than material things when they travel, according to a survey by marketing travel firm MMGY (FoxNews.com, 2 March 2015).

GEN WE AND THEIR GEN X/MILLENNIAL PARENTS

- Today's parents value their children's voice in nearly every family moment, and their kids feel valued and considered as a result. Modern parenting styles have transformed family life into a highly collaborative experience, and created, "Gen We." Kids aren't exactly

the "bosses" of the family, but they do have a seat at the board table. Kids not only expect to be able to voice their opinions, Millennial and Gen Xer parents outright ask (Iconoculture, "Growing up Grows up," June, 2014).

- Many more children than in previous generations are crafting thoughtful arguments for more pricey purchases like a pet, iPhone or a vacation destination (Iconoculture research, April 2014).



KEY ANALYSIS

The perfect family formula is a kid-approved experience that also takes some of the burden off Mom and Dad. Brands should build and market multi-layered experiences that entire families can benefit from, as opposed to exclusively "parent" or "kid" experiences. Think authentic, inclusive stories that involve the entire family.

LEISURE – INTERNATIONAL

International marketing will grow this year with emphasis on the German and Asian markets. FY16 saw the completion of a German-speaking video Visit Billings developed in partnership with Brand USA, MOTBD and other Montana CVB's. This tool will continue to be an asset used to recruit the German market.

Research will be the primary focus initially to determine how to impact the international market and properly position Billings as an interesting and dynamic destination. If research shows it's a viable segment for Billings to pursue, customer service efforts through TTA will take place in order to be sure frontline employees and the general business community understand how to make Billings a successful destination.

Within five years, China's outbound travel market will number around 200 million people. Even today, the sheer volume of outbound Chinese travelers is 3 times greater than its 2004 level and is growing exponentially (forbes.com).

Canada remains a viable international market for Billings, particularly during spring/summer when driving conditions permit safe, long-

distance travel. "Gateway" themed creative aimed at capturing travelers en route to Yellowstone National Park is leveraged for this market. As the exchange rate continues to fluctuate, so does the viability of this market. Efforts will diminish when the exchange rate is high.

Visit Billings will continue to research the international landscape for other viable markets and will seek opportunities to market our destination in partnership with other strong voices like Brand USA and the MOTBD. Additionally, group travel is significant for the international market, so efforts will shift there as well.

FAST FACTS

- China surpassed the U.S. and Germany in 2012 to become the largest source of outbound travelers in the world.
- Former U.S. Senator Max Baucus is the U.S. Ambassador to China.





GROUP TOURS

Yellowstone National Park is ranked 4th amongst the most-visited national parks in the United States. The Bighorn Battlefield is ranked the 3rd most visited tourist attraction in the state of Montana. Billings acts as a trailhead to both of these national parks serving visitors with more than 5,000 sleeping rooms, more than 300 restaurants, the Historic Walking Brewery District, strong retail offerings, museums, historical and cultural attractions, as well as adventure and recreational opportunities. The United States Tour Operators Association is rebranding its group tours as “guided vacations” and “escorted tours” to focus on “immersing travelers in local culture and customs,” according to Terry Dale, the association’s president (LATimes.com, 19 January 2016).” Our offerings and focus on area history, position Billings as a viable addition to any guided vacation along a western route.

Billings continues to rival its competitive-set cities including Bozeman and Cody, Wyoming on Yellowstone National Park entrance traffic and flight service. The fact that the Beartooth Highway, a consistently top ranked scenic drive in North America, is a 45-minute drive from Billings and leads directly into the northeast entrance to Yellowstone at Cooke City/Silver Gate, is a major asset to the Billings tourism industry and the group tour market.

DEMOGRAPHIC

- National and international group tour operators with guests interested in history, nature, national parks, exploration - typically age 45+.

GEOGRAPHIC

- The incubation period in generating successful leads in the group travel market spans a multi-year strategy where tour operators begin booking new itineraries three years ahead of tour schedule execution. Visit Billings staff will focus on marketing Billings as a preferred travel destination in the group tour market on national and international platforms to begin the process of consideration. Individual geographic segments will be researched and marketed to in a variety of ways as well in order to compete in this expanding tourism segment.

PSYCHOGRAPHIC

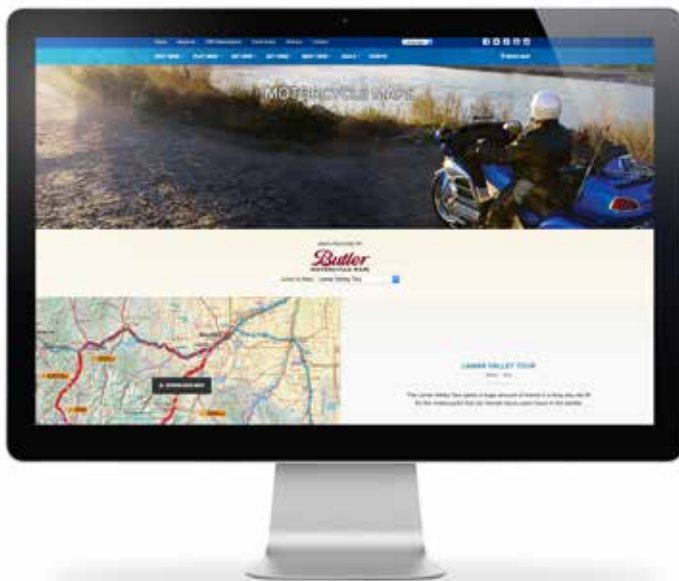
- As mentioned in the general leisure marketing segment explanation in this document, Chinese visitors are familiar with and interested in America’s national parks and frequent Yellowstone National Park ranking it number nine on lists of preferred travel destinations. Billings is a viable stopover destination in this market.
- Generally speaking, Billings is an obvious overnight stop for the motor coach industry touring the area national parks and regional attractions. A recent visitor analysis of Yellowstone Park indicates that “**enjoying nature and learning/exploration**” are strong travel motivators. Visitors to Yellowstone National Park want a natural experience as a social experience involving friends and family.



TWO/FOUR WHEELED MARKET

The two and four wheeled market is lucrative for the Billings region, with the Beartooth Highway, voted by AMA Magazine as the #1 Motorcycling Road in America, just 60 miles away. FY15 marked the addition of speaking to the female motorcycle rider and FY16 saw continued marketing to Sturgis travelers.

Visit Billings has partnered with Butler Motorcycle Maps to offer a variety of detailed tour options in order to ensure all motorcyclists enjoy the best ride experience into and out of Billings and the region.



DEMOGRAPHIC

- The target audience is men and women motorcycle enthusiasts 35-64 residing in the United States – on any model bike, in any model vehicle.
- Specifically talking to the two-wheeled group, Harley riders are generally mid-40's to early 50's. Honda Gold Wing riders can skew toward mature riders with time to tour. BMW riders can range into their 80's.

GEOGRAPHIC

- Key markets include feeder markets to Billings, Montana
 - › Denver, SLC, MSP, Seattle mainly
- Northwest - Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Idaho, Canada
- Pacific Northwest – Washington, Oregon, California, Utah
- Midwest – Illinois, Minneapolis, North and South Dakota

PSYCHOGRAPHIC

- Motorcycle riders in this area enjoy touring vacations, driving long distances and “experiencing” the journey. Women riders typically stop more often, visiting, shopping and relaxing in cities.

SMALL MEETINGS & CITYWIDE CONVENTIONS

Within a highly competitive marketplace, meeting and convention sales are a top priority for Visit Billings. Such promotion on state, regional and national levels helps grow visitation at Montana's Trailhead. Relationships with meeting and event professionals is a key to the future of this segment, along with quality properties, state-of-the-art facilities and attractions that create excitement about the destination and its brand. This segment makes up nearly 25% of visitation to Billings (Randall Travel Marketing, 2010).

Visit Billings sales efforts will focus on small market meetings and major city-wide convention business that benefits convention properties and multiple hotels. Such growth in this segment will result in continued progress in hotel occupancy, average daily rate (ADR) and impacts the local economy by filling restaurants, retailers and attractions.

Billings is a strong meeting and convention destination. Convention services and financial support help planners succeed. Along with economics, Billings is the trailhead to adventure outside the conference agenda. Western experiences and incredible vistas set the destination apart.

DEMOGRAPHIC

- Billings will stay true to itself particularly with the meetings segment. Marketing efforts will be aimed toward planners and decision makers of **small market** meetings, those with 400 attendees or less, utilizing three or more hotels with approximately 400 peak room nights and 8,000 square feet of meeting space.

- Billings' amenities and access to surrounding bucket list attractions elevates its position with **city-wide convention** groups like BMW MOA, Gold Wing, Corvette, Mustang and Harley.

- Record attendance and success for previously hosted rallies positions Billings well for future city-wide bookings in the **two and four wheel markets** and beyond.

GEOGRAPHIC

- National audience scope with an emphasis on reaching decision-makers and planners of the following industries: two and/or four-wheeled, energy, agriculture, religious, corporate, military trails, cycling, outdoor/recreation, healthcare, non-profit and professional and trade associations.

PSYCHOGRAPHICS

- Planners and convention goers expect meeting **experiences** that rival a personal vacation. Billings offers the necessities to execute a successful meeting for the planner with quality must-see opportunities right outside the hotel doors for the attendee. *'Memorably creative and unique'* are among the standards of site selection and execution, however, there's also an evolving demand for *'luxury taste on a tight budget'* for the planner.

- Sales efforts should be to "sell the experience," not the facility.



SPORTS EVENTS

Billings is a leader in state and regional sporting events. As a sports event hub, Billings offers a wide range of venues accommodating several sports categories. The current venues, coupled with strong air service options and trailhead access to Big Sky Country help position Billings well in this tourism segment. Team-friendly restaurants, local attractions, affordability and competitive room rates, also help make Billings an ideal sports hub for youth, high school, collegiate and amateur athletic events.

Sports tourism is a highly competitive arena in the destination marketing and management world. The industry, for Billings, represents varying forms of individual and team travel at all levels of competition. From soccer and wrestling to road races and softball, Billings plays a major role in high school and travel competition. Sports visitation includes not only the athletes, coaches, officials and trainers but also parents and family members. This supportive group comes to play a loyal role, but seeks experiences outside of a tournament bracket. At the same time, there are athletes, professional and amateur, whom make Montana part of their itineraries to hike, raft and climb as well as experience fishing, hunting and birding. However, there are opportunities for Billings to expand and grow in the sports tourism segment.

Billings has proven it knows sports and helps execute sporting events quite well as the home to major annual events like the Big Sky State Games, Montana Women's Run, Montana Marathon, All Class State High School Wrestling Tournament, Heart and Sole Run, Stockman Bank Magic City Classic and Big Sky VolleyFest, to name a few. A major strength in this segment, is emerging community presence as a strong road race destination. This success is due in part to a forward-thinking group of community runners and volunteers as well as supportive college coaches and athletic directors. Visit Billings looks forward to continuing to foster relationships with such local and regional sports organizers in order to grow existing and encourage new events at Montana's Trailhead.

The future of sports in Billings is a simultaneous growth process which focuses on expanding Billings' sports products, an essential part in the future of the segment, and strengthening the commitment to positioning the destination as a sports event hub. In FY17, Visit

Billings, together with community leaders, will execute a sports facility feasibility study in order to hone in on the sports that are under served and have major recruitment potential such as aquatics. This research will be a crucial piece of the future of sports at Montana's Trailhead.

FY16 witnessed many successes in Visit Billings' sports segment efforts, including new events like the 406 Duathlon Challenge, curling, as well as multiple key state and expanded regional softball tournaments. Support for the First Interstate Border War, Montana Marathon, Yellowstone Kelly Triathlon, Warrior Run, and American Legion events also continued to grow. FY17 will witness NCAA bid efforts as well as the 2016 NCAA DII Cross Country West Region Championships. The years ahead are strong for the destination in sports, but planning for the next decade and beyond are a necessity to continue the growth of this lucrative segment and maximize it's benefit for the community as a whole.

In conclusion, expanding relationships with current event organizers, cultivating new relationships with sports planners and marketing in key publications to position Billings as a sports destination, will help nurture this crucial tourism segment. Arming the community and DMO with appropriate research while focusing on servicing/ supporting sports events to meet the high expectations of the athlete, fan and organizer are also essential. These coordinated efforts will further support our ultimate goal of becoming a regional sports hub.

DEMOGRAPHIC

- Sports meeting and event planners, and sports industry decision makers representing sports events such as soccer, baseball, hockey, football, wrestling, dance, figure skating, cross country, and cheerleading. Sporting events include amateur, K-12, collegiate, semi-pro and pro.

GEOGRAPHIC

- Primarily a regional scope to include Northwest, Pacific Northwest and Midwest conferences and associations.

PSYCHOGRAPHIC

- Sports planners are seeking destinations that offer ample state-of-the-art sports venues with easy access, diverse dining options, and **"Things to Do,"** for not only the traveling teams, but the entire family. Cities and towns are seeing the benefits as sports trips turn into mini-vacations for families. Positioning Billings as a family-friendly, sports destination will help to secure more opportunities for continued growth.





EMERGING MARKETS

Themes Visit Billings will explore in the coming year include:

- **Birding – Nature – Agriculture**
- **Medical Tourism**
- **Brew Enthusiast**
 - › Over the last couple of years, the number of new brewery openings has been at unprecedented levels, with the U.S. having the highest total since the 1880s. Nielsen reports that 58.9% of craft beer drinkers have annual incomes of \$75,000 or more. Montana’s only Walking Brewery District makes Billings a viable option for craft brew enthusiasts.
- **Mountain Bikers**
- **Shecations – Shopping/Spa**
- **Mancations – Hill Climb/Sportsmen/Car Shows/Frisbee Golf**
- **Race Destination**
 - › More facilities are offering “site running” or “jogging tours” to their fleet of services. This illustrates lifestyle preferences trends.
- **Small Groups – Reunions – Families**
 - › Group travel has been on the upswing over the last several years, but the look and motivation are shifting. Busy professionals have limited time off; Boomers are physically active and eager to connect with their kids and grandkids; parents want quality time with their kids in a neutral setting; single women who like spoiling nieces, nephews and godchildren; still-working Mature pals crossing items off their bucket list over a **long weekend**.
 - › Boomers are driving multi-generational travel, but they aren’t just traveling with their families. They’re also traveling with one another, in **smaller packs**. According to 68% of travel agents, most female clients taking trips in small groups are over the age of 45.
 - › These scenarios represent the growing number of traveler types inspired by a **shorter-plus-smaller group trip** that maximizes bonding time, while keeping practical constraints like time and money in close consideration.





GOALS

2016-17 STRATEGIC GOALS

GROW VISITATION AT MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD

The Marketing Plan supports goals laid out in the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development's Strategic Plan 2013-17.

GOAL #1

FOSTER VISITOR GROWTH AT MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD

Visit Billings, as a destination management organization (DMO), promotes Billings as a travel product. The Visit Billings team assists the destination and stakeholders (Billings and Yellowstone County Lodging partners) by using strategic marketing campaigns, deliberate activities, tourism leads, sales missions, familiarization tours, and other regional, domestic and international promotional efforts to increase visitation to the city and county. Full hotels equate to full restaurants, retail outlets and community attractions.

GOAL #2

SUPPORT AIRPORT PROGRESSION

A proven strength for Billings and the surrounding region is Logan Airport. Numerous flights per day serving several major hubs including Salt Lake City, Denver and Minneapolis/St. Paul, help grow visitation at Montana's Trailhead and sustain a strong business climate. In FY17, Visit Billings will continue to partner with community leaders and partners to foster airport progression. From air service, capacity, fares, efficiency and overall experience, Visit Billings will support City of Billings and Logan Airport officials in their efforts to strengthen the facility and relationships with major carriers.

The Fly Billings highly targeted marketing campaigns will continue in FY17. These campaigns encourage residents outside of Billings, with multiple options to fly out of Wyoming or other Montana airports, to utilize Logan. Potential travelers are enticed by Stay and Fly programs at Billings' hotels, which offer economical rates, secured parking and airport shuttles.

The Billings Tourism Business Improvement District (BTBID) Board of Directors will take part in community efforts to explore funding options for air service subsidies and grant prospects for future growth together with the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and other community partners.

GOAL #3

INCREASE LEISURE VISITATION WITH A VALUE SEASON EMPHASIS

From the regional resident to the international traveler, Billings is an attractive destination. Local amenities and gateway access to national attractions help strengthen the destination's brand. The overall leisure marketing strategy is to increase year round 'leisure' visitation. In order to do so, efforts will focus on innovative marketing mediums to reach new and/or existing travelers while supporting their decision to choose Billings as their next vacation destination.

October-April marks "value season" in Billings, when tourism traffic and business slows due to weather, a lack of access to Yellowstone National Park (Beartooth Highway access to the northeast entrance of Yellowstone stops since the scenic byway isn't plowed/maintained except for high season) and limited use of more seasonal or regional attractions. Efforts will be made to highlight the destination during the "value season" to niche markets including competitive running events, concerts, cultural opportunities, winter outdoor enthusiasts and more. Discussions will take place to create a reason to visit Billings in the value season, including but not limited to a Restaurant Week and a Craft Beer Festival.

Summer months or 'high season' propose greater opportunities to attract visitors, but concentrated marketing efforts in the fall, winter and spring - highlighting a combination of desirable rates and quieter attractions, supports the true mission of Visit Billings by generating room nights for lodging facilities year round.

GOAL #4

POSITION BILLINGS AS A SPORTS EVENTS DESTINATION

Billings is the trailhead to trophy celebrations for youth, high school, collegiate and amateur sporting events. Strong facility offerings combined with more than 5,000 sleeping rooms, hundreds of restaurants and plenty to do outside of a tournament bracket, helps make Billings a competitive sports destination.

As the sports travel segment continues to grow in Billings, it's necessary for the community and Visit Billings as a DMO, to have a better understanding of the opportunities that would be available to recruit new, and expand existing, sporting events, if proper facilities were available. Visit Billings will work with community partners and sports industry experts to look at executing a sports facility feasibility study to better position Billings as a sports event hub.

Visit Billings staff will continue to work with local organizers for travel and youth events and also athletic directors on the high school and collegiate levels to mine future opportunities. Simultaneously, Billings is evolving into a highly attractive road race destination. Established races like the Montana Women's Run, Heart and Sole Race and Montana Marathon together with new events like the 406 Duathlon Challenge, Warrior Run and Tuff Stuff, help get visitors excited about the opportunities that await them at Montana's Trailhead where you can compete and celebrate!

**“DO WHAT YOU DO SO WELL THAT
THEY WILL WANT TO SEE IT AGAIN
AND BRING THEIR FRIENDS.”**

- Walt Disney

GOAL #5

THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

A quality visitor experience will directly impact the future of tourism at Montana's Trailhead. According to ITRR, 76% of Montana travelers are repeat visitors. This means they enjoyed their prior trip so much, they came back. For the Visit Billings team, success is a visitor who leaves town looking at Billings in his/her rearview mirror and can't wait for the next trip. How frontline employees and Billings residents in general, treat a visitor, directly impacts that person's desire to return. Also, with today's technical offerings via social media, a positive experience can directly impact perception as one shares experiences with friends, family members and colleagues; all potential visitors whom may choose to make Billings part of a future itinerary.

Through the well-established Trailhead Tourism Ambassador (TTA) program, tourism partners are offered the opportunity to take part in training that will allow them to learn more about Billings as a destination. By being exposed to tourism attractions and learning about the importance of treating visitors well, tourism promoters can positively impact the visitor experience and help grow the industry.

Additionally, meeting, convention and sports events servicing is a major component to help build a positive visitor experience. Staff will work together with planners to assist with components of convention execution via registration assistance, pre and post event touring

support, attendance building and transportation assistance. Ultimately, making sure event organizers realize we are here to ensure their event is successful, when hosted in Billings, will help grow visitation and destination loyalty.

GOAL #6

THE INTERNATIONAL MARKETPLACE

According to the U.S. Travel Association, in an effort to make the U.S. more competitive in attracting high-value international travelers to America, Congress approved, with overwhelming bipartisan support in 2010, the first-ever public-private partnership to promote America as a destination to travelers around the world. Doing business as Brand USA, the success of the program led Congress to reauthorize it in 2014 with a five-year extension. In the program's early stages, Brand USA's economic impact in attracting international visitors has been wildly successful.

Top leisure activities for overseas visitors: (1) shopping, (2) sightseeing; (3) fine dining; (4) national parks/monuments and (5) amusement/theme parks.

As a destination, Billings aligns well with the goals of the international visitor with plans to experience the west and Montana. Strategies will include partnering with Brand USA, Rocky Mountain International (RMI), and the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD) to help research and grow promotional programs aimed at accommodating the international traveler.

GOAL #7

MEETING AND CONVENTION RECRUITMENT

In Billings, nearly one quarter of the tourism industry is represented in state, regional and national meeting and convention attendance (Randall Travel Research, 2010). Targeted sales strategies for small market and large city-wide events will secure business in this segment. In the face of competition, Billings continues to grow this market. Sales efforts to accommodate group meetings of 400 or fewer attendees or major city-wide conventions like the Gold Wing Road Riders Association Wing Ding 38 that attract thousands of people, will be the center of meeting and convention recruitment and sales missions in FY17. Growing an account base is a major priority for Billings as a destination. Working with the city's six (6) primary convention properties, sales efforts will result in more site visits to Billings, more sales proposals and ultimately, increased bookings to fulfill the Visit Billings mission and grow this segment in partnership with all stakeholders and tourism partners.

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	YTD - FY16*	FY17
Total Bookings	26	30	42	36	46	TBD
Citywide Events	2	4	2	4	4	TBD
Meetings & Conventions	21	16	26	20	23	TBD
Sports Events	3	10	14	5	10	TBD
Citywide Sports Events	-	-	-	7**	9	TBD
Total Room Nights	10,349	24,130	28,465	55,164	27,787	TBD
Web Visits	84,200	146,070	214,207	265,483	318,120	430,000 (projected)
Stakeholder Survey	83%	87%	88%	TBA	TBD	TBD
Room Demand	11.20%	3.40%	** -1.7%	-6.5%	TBD	TBD

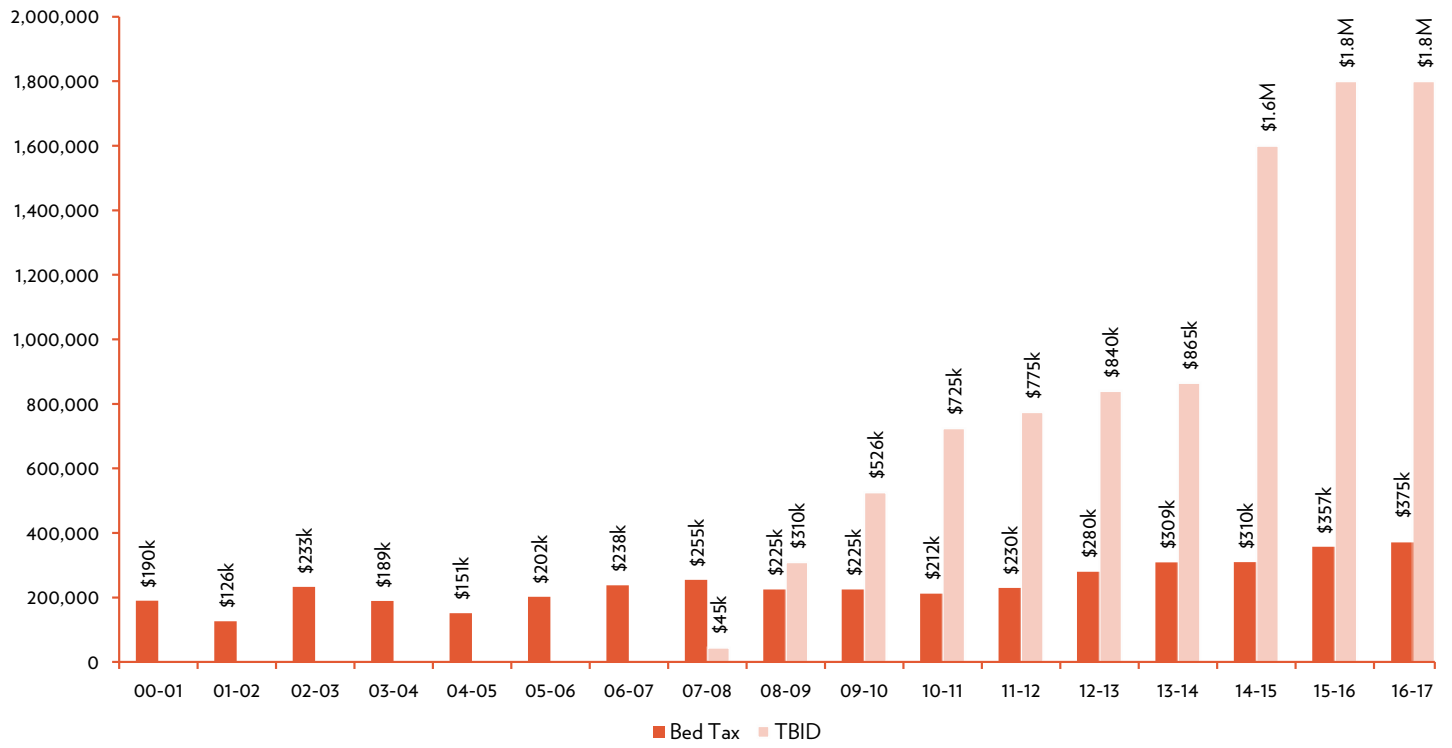
* Includes reporting for first three quarters of FY16. This document was created ahead of the conclusion of FY16.

** First official entry for Citywide Sports Events.

***Billings Logan Airport was closed for seven (7) weeks in July and August of 2013, for runway resurfacing. This closure had a huge impact on Room Demand and Occupancy in Billings.

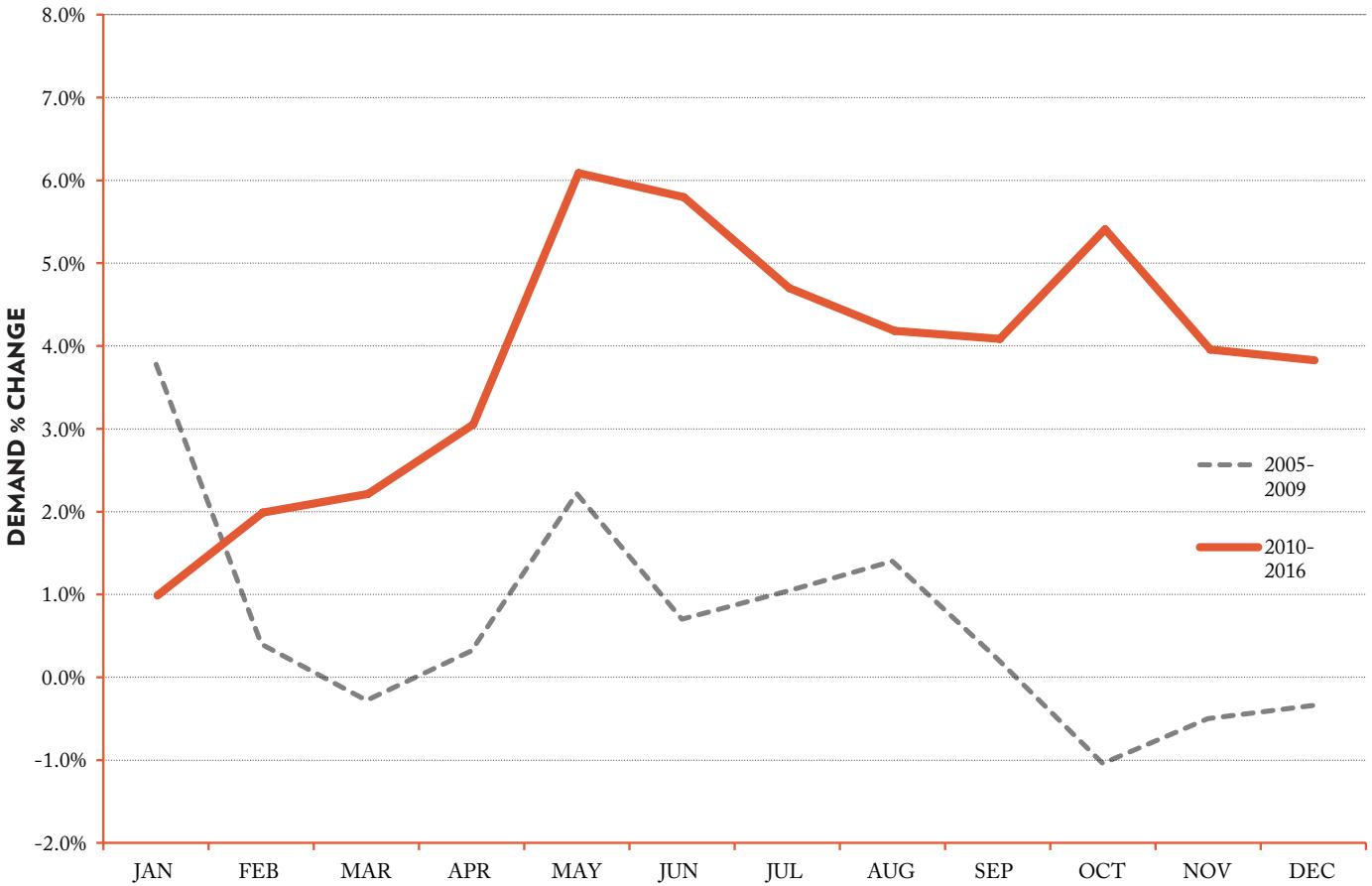
ITEM	DEFINITION
Citywide Events	A group utilizing three or more hotels with approximately 400 peak room nights and approximately 8,000 square feet.
Meetings & Conventions	Anything smaller than defined above.
Sports Events	Any athletic event that utilizes hotel rooms and a sports venue in the Billings area.
Citywide Sports Events	A sports group utilizing three or more hotels with approximately 400 peak room nights and approximately 8,000 square feet.
Total Bookings	Citywide Events + Meetings/Conventions + Sports Events
Total Room Nights	Total room nights sold.
Web Visits	Success is measured by total visits to VisitBillings.com. Conversion is considered to be any activity beyond the home page. Google Analytics is used for tracking and monitoring.
Stakeholder Survey	Annual survey sent to Stakeholders soliciting feedback, graded on a 0-100% scale.
Room Demand	Increased visitation YOY.

COLLECTIONS GROWTH 2000-2017



ROOM DEMAND

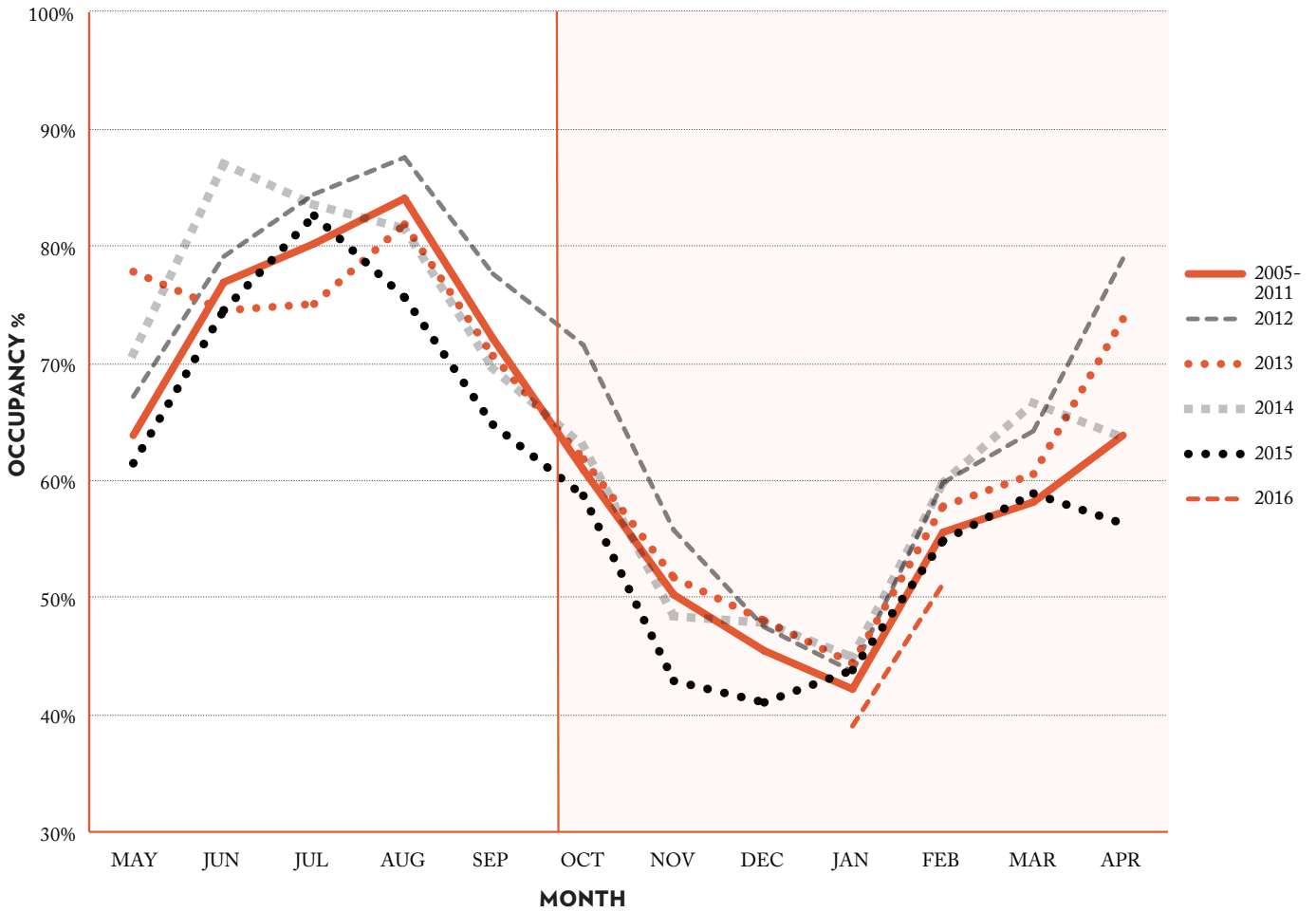
Demand reflects accurately increased visitation. Where Occupancy is impacted by the number of rooms in inventory, Demand is a true picture of the number of total rooms sold.





ROOM OCCUPANCY

Room Occupancy is $(\text{Rooms Sold}) \div (\text{Rooms available}) \times (100)$. Occupancy is expressed as a percentage of rooms occupied.







STRATEGIES

MARKETING METHODS: LEISURE

METHODS/TACTICS

- Advertising • Newsletters • Photography
- VisitBillings.com • Scenic Drive App
- Billings Guidebook • Emerging Strategies

In looking at marketing Billings as a preferred destination, it's important to note that different marketing strategies and messages are applied depending on the audience scope, season and specific media channel.

REGIONAL MARKETING messages will appeal to a drive audience, interested in shopping, dining, events and weekend getaways in Billings, and strive to showcase the many ways the region can experience Billings throughout the year, including Value Season. In doing so, creative concepts appeal to girlfriends, sportsmen, families and weekend adventurers alike. Direct calls to action driving consumers to a customized landing page on VisitBillings.com have been successful for Billings. The use of giveaways and contests are used to drive engagement with social channels.

Themed regional campaigns will be launched, without interruption, every 8-12 weeks throughout the year to continually invite and inspire folks from the drive region to visit Billings, offering reasons not only to visit Billings, but opportunities to engage with our destination brand as the client is within the decision-making process. Niche campaigns, specific to events and direct travel drivers will run simultaneously as appropriate.

Each regional campaign will feature a unique concept, design and message, building on brand standards and featuring a familiar look/feel. The objective is to drive traffic and awareness to VisitBillings.com without creative burnout.

Placements and creative will speak to the travel purchase path using programmatic advertising strategies. The initial ad will focus on INSPIRING potential visitors; as potential clients engage with the ad, creative messages will shift from inspiration to researching, exploring, ORIENTING, and ultimately FACILITATING a trip. The number

of people served the creative will get smaller as the message becomes more targeted. This method will be especially useful in both regional and national markets, like MSP, Denver and Seattle.

NATIONAL MARKETING messages will position Visit Billings as the **Gateway to Yellowstone** National Park, establishing the value of Billings as a convenient, authentic and unforgettable destination to include in vacation planning. Travel writers and travelers have increasingly equated a sense of "authenticity" or "local experiences" with things "not found in a guidebook." (ReidonTravel.com July 2013). Annual placements will be ignited by Q3-4 marketing efforts aimed to reach travelers interested in unforgettable spring/summer travel experiences, both flying and driving.

Placements in proven publications and websites will continue: TripAdvisor.com, Budget Travel, and select national travel publications. Preference is given to print media with digital components when Billings-specific editorial can be leveraged.

INTERNATIONAL MARKETING is a segment the Visit Billings team continues to explore and research. The strategy begins with the process of educating potential visitors in Germany, Asia, and other proven markets. Forthcoming research will dictate the specific demographic and geographic Asian markets that are appropriate for Billings.

Messaging will position Billing as a western destination with urban amenities, access to Yellowstone National Park, outdoor adventure, and unrivaled historical icons.

Initiatives include utilizing partnerships and strong voices through the MOTBD and Brand USA as appropriate to amplify Billings' impact in the vast markets.

Additionally, international travel recruitment shows like IPW and RMI will be utilized to further understand the markets and build Billings as a destination of choice, and build awareness for Billings as THE Gateway to Yellowstone, as many operators are only aware of Bozeman.

2016-17 REGIONAL CAMPAIGN SCHEDULE *

TIMING	CAMPAIGN	DURATION
July-Aug, 2016	Summer	8 weeks
Sept-Oct, 2016	Fall	9 weeks
Nov-Dec, 2016	Holiday	8 weeks
Jan-Mar, 2017	Winter	12 weeks
Apr-June, 2017	Spring	13 weeks

* Niche campaigns will take place in addition to the schedule outlined above as appropriate.





FY17 will see also Visit Billings continue to expand in the **Canadian** market, with emphasis on markets directly above the state of Montana geographically – Alberta and Saskatchewan territories. Access to history, scenic landscapes and outdoor adventure make Billings a competitive destination when exchange rates are strong.

Finally, Visit Billings will continue to research other potential international markets in FY17.

The Asian market presents several strengths for Billings' positioning:

- Max Baucus (US Ambassador to China) helps position Montana tourism in China.

- Primary destinations are New York and LA. However, Yellowstone is often 3rd on their lists, making Billings a strong contender.
- Visas can now be used for 10 years rather than one visit, which may shorten visits but will bring them back multiple times (making that third visit to our region more likely).
- This market is not necessarily seeking experiential travel, but iconic photo opportunities, which Billings has an abundance of.
- Prime travel time is May and October. This is a strength for our target value season, but may present a challenge in promoting the Beartooth Highway as a Gateway to Yellowstone.

PRINT ADVERTISING - REGIONAL

Because a significant percentage of the regional audience resides in small-medium markets, print remains a relevant component to the media strategy – rural newspapers, state publications and regional magazines. Advertising in local newspapers is a proven method for reaching an older demographic.

REGIONAL SPRING, 2016 (APR-JUNE)

REGIONAL WINTER, 2016 (JAN-MAR)

MAKE A BREAK FOR *Visit Billings*
MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD

DOWNHILL AND CROSS COUNTRY SKI MONTANA'S ONLY WALKABLE BREWERY DISTRICT
FAMILY FUN UNWIND ADVENTURE
SPA DAYS RELAX SWIM BILLINGS
MONTANA'S CITY AWARD WINNING CUISINE

PICK YOUR PACKAGE & ENTER TO WIN
With something for everyone, make a break for #VisitBillings this winter.

- FAMILY FUN PACKAGE**
4 passes to The Reef Indoor Water Park, dinner at a Billings restaurant valued up to \$100 & one night's hotel stay.
- SPA PACKAGE**
\$200 in spa treatments, dinner at a Billings restaurant valued up to \$100 and one night's hotel stay.
- SKI PACKAGE**
4 full day lift tickets to Red Lodge Mountain, dinner at a Billings restaurant valued up to \$100 & a \$50 gas card.

PICK YOUR PACKAGE AND ENTER TO WIN AT VisitBillings.com/break

REGIONAL HOLIDAY, 2015 (NOV-DEC)

HELLO HOLIDAYS

SHOPPING, FESTIVE EVENTS, GREAT GIVEAWAYS AND DEALS

ZOO LIGHTS MONTANA'S ONLY WALKABLE BREWERY DISTRICT
FESTIVE ONE STOP SHOPPING
HOLIDAY EVENTS GALORE BILLINGS
FUN MONTANA'S CITY CHRISTMAS STROLL

Visit Billings
MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD #VisitBillings

WIN NOW

REGIONAL NICHE - FLY BILLINGS (SEPT-NOV 2015 & MAR-MAY 2016)

VISIT Billings
MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD

STAY & FLY
BILLINGS, MONTANA


BIG SKY MONTANA'S ONLY WALKABLE BREWERY DISTRICT
EXPLORE ADVENTURE CONVENIENT
#FLYBILLINGS
TRAVEL WITH EASE URBAN DESTINATION MONTANA'S CITY

FLY THROUGH BILLINGS FOR YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE


- Convenient non-stop flights serving nine major hubs
- 5,000+ rooms with hotels ranging from brand name chains to local historic properties
- Best selection for shopping in the area paired with award-winning cuisine

BOOK NOW FOR SPECIAL HOTEL RATES:
VisitBillings.com/fly

REGIONAL FALL, 2015 (SEPT-OCT)

VISIT **Billings**
MONTANA'S  TRAILHEAD





**GREAT GEAR,
COLD BEER, GAME ON!**
IN BILLINGS, MONTANA

MONTANA'S ONLY WALKABLE BREWERY DISTRICT
ADVENTURE GEAR UP
HUNTING **BILLINGS**
BIG SKY COUNTRY  FISHING
BIGHORN RIVER

**YOUR TRAILHEAD TO THE LATEST
GEAR AND AWARD-WINNING BEER**

Billings is the ideal destination for fall gear purchases, rentals and guides. Extend your stay with a killer steak, craft beer and local spirits in Montana's only Walking Brewery District.

Adventures Depart Daily in Billings, Montana's Trailhead

Plan Now: VisitBillings.com/hunt    

VISIT **Billings**
MONTANA'S  TRAILHEAD

**GREAT GEAR,
COLD BEER,
GAME ON!**
IN BILLINGS, MONTANA

MONTANA'S ONLY WALKABLE BREWERY DISTRICT
ADVENTURE GEAR UP
HUNTING **BILLINGS**
BIG SKY COUNTRY  FISHING
BIGHORN RIVER

**YOUR TRAILHEAD TO
THE LATEST GEAR AND
AWARD-WINNING BEER**

Billings is the ideal destination for fall gear purchases, rentals and guides. Extend your stay with a killer steak, craft beer and local spirits in Montana's only Walking Brewery District.

*Adventures Depart Daily in
Billings, Montana's Trailhead*    

Plan Now: VisitBillings.com/beer

REGIONAL SUMMER 2015 (JULY-AUG)

Magic City Blues,
Courtesy of Billings Gazette

EXPERIENCE SUMMER IN BILLINGS, MONTANA

With all there is to do this summer, you're going to want to make it a long weekend.

**ENTER TO WIN A
CUSTOM TRIP
PACKAGE**

JULY
Last Best Country Fest | Big Sky State Games | Mötley Crüe
Montana Brews & BBQ | BMW MOA Rally ... *and more!*

AUGUST
Magic City Blues | Slide the City | MontanaFair
PRCA Rodeo | Dirty Dash ... *and more!*

ALL SUMMER
Beartooth Hwy | Museums | ZooMontana | Pompeys Pillar
Walking Brewery District | Summer Concerts and Events
Billings Mustangs Baseball ... *and more!*

ENTER TO WIN NOW: VisitBillings.com/summer

REGIONAL SPRING 2015 (APRIL-JUNE)

YOUR TRAILHEAD TO SPRING GETAWAYS

PICK YOUR PACKAGE AND ENTER TO WIN
There's a lot to love about spring in #VisitBillings

- 1 OUTDOOR LOVERS**
\$100 gas card for a day trip of your choice, dinner at a Billings restaurant valued up to \$100 and one night's hotel stay.
- 2 FOODIE LOVERS**
\$100 gift card to experience the Walking Brewery District, dinner at a Billings restaurant valued up to \$100 and one night's hotel stay.
- 3 ENTERTAINMENT LOVERS**
Two tickets valued up to \$100 to the event of your choice, dinner at a Billings restaurant valued up to \$100 and one night's hotel stay.

Pick a package and enter to win at VisitBillings.com/spring

“MONTANA SHOULD COME WITH A SURGEON GENERAL WARNING THAT IT’S ADDICTIVE. THE SKY IS BIG AND BLUE, AND THE AIR IS ALWAYS FRESH AND CRISP AND SCENTED WITH PINE. THERE’S A FRONTIER SPIRIT, BUT ALSO A CALMNESS, BEAUTY IN THE LANDSCAPE THAT SLOWS YOUR PULSE.”

- Robin Bielman, Keeping Mr. Right Now

PRINT ADVERTISING - NATIONAL

Gateway themed creative in hi-glossy travel and outdoor magazines that also focus on the digital and social viewing habits of their key audience will continue to be our focus in reaching national and international audiences. The key placements identified below include, but are not limited to the scope of publications utilized to reach this audience. Visit Billings is constantly mining for viable opportunities to reach and grow this audience. Copy, images, headlines and premium placements are customized per publication, theme and audience to maximize our exposure as well as leverage our familiar brand standards throughout.

YOUR TRAILHEAD TO MONTANA'S **BIG SKY COUNTRY**

EXPERIENCE SCENIC BEARTOOTH HIGHWAY TO **YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK**

Shaped by the Yellowstone River and sheltered by the sandstone Rimrocks, Billings is Montana's City, a place of forever views, history and adventure right out your hotel door. Step back in time at Little Bighorn Battlefield, sample craft beer and local spirits in Montana's only walkable brewery district, and take in the stunning views of what has been called "the most beautiful drive in America," the Beartooth Highway, just 60 miles from Billings. The fresh mountain air and forever views will follow you no matter where your travels take you. Include Billings, Montana's Trailhead as part of your Yellowstone trip today.

PLAN NOW: VisitBillings.com/usa

YOUR TRAILHEAD FOR A GREAT ESCAPE TO **BIG SKY COUNTRY**



EXPERIENCE A VIBRANT URBAN DESTINATION ON THE EDGE OF MONTANA'S WILD FRONTIER

Shaped by the Yellowstone River and sheltered by the sandstone Rimrocks, Billings is Montana's City. Whether you want the local experience or feel more comfortable with national brands, Billings fits the bill. With shopping and cuisine that is unique to "Montana's style," you can cowboy (or cowgirl) it up, or find the latest trends and treasures. Billings is also regionally positioned to provide your group tour an ideal hub to access forever views, history and adventure throughout your visit. Step back in time at Little Bighorn Battlefield, sample craft beer and local spirits in Montana's only walkable brewery district, and take in the stunning views from the Beartooth Highway. The highway is only 60 miles from Billings and has been described as, "the most beautiful drive in America." The fresh mountain air and forever views will follow you no matter where your travels take you. Include Billings, Montana's Trailhead as part of your tour today.



Access our online travel guide today: VisitBillings.com/selecttraveler



PRINT + DIGITAL ADVERTISING - INTERNATIONAL

The team will continue to research, and mine for viable opportunities to reach an international audience, to include Asia, Europe and Canada.

**IHR STARTPUNKT FÜR DAS GROßE DURCHATMEN IN
BIG SKY COUNTRY**

VISIT Billings®
MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD

**ERLEBEN SIE EIN AUFREGENDES
URBANES REISEZIEL DIREKT AN
MONTANAS WILDER GRENZE**

- *Heimat von Montanas einzigem fußläufigem Brauerei-Viertel*
- *ein Ort voller Geschichte und Aussichten für die Ewigkeit*
- *nur 97 Kilometer vom schönsten Eingang zum Yellowstone Nationalpark entfernt*

**Das Abenteuer beginnt in
Billings, Montana**

**PLANEN SIE IHRE REISE JETZT:
VisitBillings.com/america**

“IT SEEMS TO ME THAT MONTANA IS A GREAT SPLASH OF GRANDEUR. THE SCALE IS HUGE BUT NOT OVERPOWERING. THE LAND IS RICH WITH GRASS AND COLOR, AND THE MOUNTAINS ARE THE KIND I WOULD CREATE IF MOUNTAINS WERE EVER PUT ON MY AGENDA.”

- John Steinbeck, *Travels with Charley*

TELEVISION ADVERTISING

According to the *MOTBD Trends Report*, brands are getting wiser with content by creating **highly digestible and enjoyable pieces** that may shift brand perception (April, 2015). 2016 saw continued use of video to drive campaign traffic with a high-energy, compelling 1x: 15 video.

In FY16, the winter and spring campaign utilizing the VisitBillings.com/TV vanity URL has accounted for nearly 2,010 hits to VisitBillings.com to date, which represented approximately 10-15% of the total campaign driven traffic. These clicks originated exclusively from the video component with no cross-pollination from other campaign respondents. This continued FY16 traffic is on target to surpass FY15 efforts once the spring campaign concludes in June 2016. Combined FY15 winter and spring campaigns accounted for a grand total of 2,402 visits.



DIGITAL ADVERTISING - REGIONAL





Display advertising is by definition a “pattern interrupt” type of marketing which means the creative content needs to be so captivating that the visitor will stop browsing to click on your ad, or so impactful they will come back to it later - ultimately transporting them into the sales path. Display advertising is relevant, especially when powered by laser targeting. The digital plan is an integrated mix of direct buys on regional news and TV websites, as well as **programmatic** to serve ads across the Internet based on a person’s behavior, demographics and interests.

The strategy for digital banners is to focus on the best-performing ad sizes - leaderboard (728x90) and big box ads (300x250). The box ad is also served on mobile. Mobile impressions continue to yield high CTRs (.17%-.25%) at a low CPC commitment. Mobile will remain a viable component of the FY17 media mix.

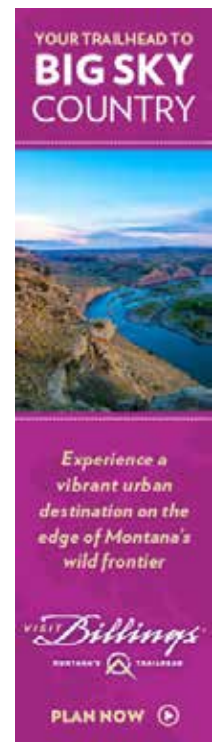
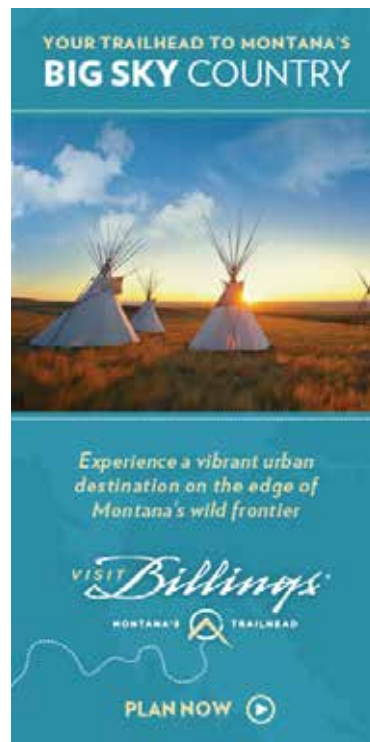
DIGITAL ADVERTISING - NATIONAL

The objective for national digital placements is to inspire potential travelers, and orient those that are researching and booking summer vacations. Hyper-targeting will be utilized within each placement to serve impressions based on a person’s behavior, demographics and interests.

Digital platforms that serve editorial, advertorials, e-newsletters, digital magazine placements and social media posts have been successful for Visit Billings.

AD CHANNEL	DESCRIPTION
	<p>Trip Advisor is the world’s largest travel site, enabling travelers to plan and experience the perfect trip. Complete with trusted advice from real travelers and a wide variety of choices, Trip Advisor is a trusted partner.</p> <p>The 2016-17 plan proposes a continuation of its Tourism Sponsorship contract whereby visitors can navigate to a unique page featuring Billings, Montana. Geo-targeting MT, WY, ND, SD and Canada.</p>
	<p>Budget Travel is a multi-platform travel media and services company that empowers consumers to travel the globe on any budget. Budget Travel branded content reaches more than 5.5 million consumers monthly through digital, books, mobile, apps, social media and tablets. Increased investment on this proven platform continues to yield impressive results.</p>
	<p>Sojern’s robust platform is powered by programmatic buying, and travel data insights. Boasting access to over 200 million traveler profiles and billions of intent data points, Sojern connects to a valuable, qualified audience and drives conversions.</p>
	<p>iExplore is the top travel junkie site for adventure and experiential travel. Forbes Magazine has recognized it as the “Best Adventure Travel Website” for eight years counting! More than 71% of iExplore visitors have NOT made a travel destination decision prior to visiting the site. (MOTBD)</p>

DIGITAL ADVERTISING - REGIONAL AND NATIONAL



PAY PER CLICK

YouTube advertising is considered to be a successful component of integrated marketing mix. We've seen solid online lift from campaign-based videos for Winter and Spring, while costs remain very reasonable. Additionally, we run an ongoing campaign using our full-length promo video with a monthly spend set at \$500. This year's \$6,000 spend has led to 1,591 sessions on the site, for roughly a \$3.77 CPC. Viewership was at 31,476, giving us \$0.19 CPV. Impressions are geo-targeted to Montana, Wyoming, and the Dakotas.

AdWords continues to be a solid performer as a part of the media mix. It consistently provides approximately 10% of site traffic to VisitBillings.com, and is very reasonably priced: our current CPC is \$.37 and monthly spend is set at \$500. Increasing monthly budget would yield further clicks while maintaining price efficiency.

RADIO

Rural communities are often "radio communities," and the Visit Billings regional geographic market has no shortage. Oil, agriculture and tourism drive the economy. In 2016-17 we will continue to consider this medium to reach a rural audience with target radio (:30) commercials on country, adult contemporary and news talk stations.

NATIVE ADVERTISING

Native advertising is advertising designed to be integrated into a specific site or platform, and blend seamlessly with current content. Native ads leverage the "non-disruptive" engagement model of reaching consumers.

Native ads are one of the fastest growing digital ad formats, more likely to get clicked compared to historical display ads, achieving greater cost efficiencies. When done right, they drive post click behavior as well as branding metrics, linking users to content that engages and communicates. Direct buy placements as well as programmatic impressions will be utilized to strategically reach a qualified audience.

OUT-OF-HOME ADVERTISING

Out-of-home (OOH) advertising reaches consumers while they are "on the go" outside their home. The Outdoor Advertising Association of America classifies outdoor media formats in four categories: billboards (traditional and digital), street furniture (bus shelters, news racks), transit (buses, taxis, airports) and alternative (anything you can imagine). A 2013 Arbitron Out-of-Home Advertising Study revealed that OOH viewership among travelers is 84% and OOH media viewers overall are more likely to live in upper-income households.

Out-of-home advertising will continue to be included in the 2016-17 Marketing Plan, to capture consumers while they are traveling, and to further position Billings as Montana's Trailhead.

OUT-OF-HOME - TRANSIT

Visit Billings seeks to repeat the Minneapolis (MSP) Airport Takeover installations in the direct flight markets of either Seattle or Dallas. Messaging will position Billings as THE Gateway to Yellowstone National Park while elevating the city of Billings as a destination of choice.

OUT-OF-HOME - ALTERNATIVE

More than just billboards, alternative OOH media placements can include coffee cup sleeves, store bags, and even chalk art.

FY16 saw the installation of alluring and memorable creative on five tractor trailers through DTS. These trailers travel throughout the western half of the United States and encourage viewers to use #DrivetoBillings. This OOH placement will continue through FY17 with prizes for users who post photos of the trucks on the road to social media.







MOBILE VISITOR KIOSK

Visit Billings would like to introduce a **branded promotional vehicle** that would act as a mobile visitor kiosk – to be set up at trade shows, sporting events, welcome receptions and festivals, both locally and elsewhere as appropriate. The concept could build on a fun camper/tour style (Where Ya' Headin?), a Trailhead Tailgate, or more of a backdrop set. Visit Billings staff and volunteers will man the mobile marketing tool, spreading the Billings message, and imparting a lasting impression on all those who encounter it.

OUT-OF-HOME - BILLBOARDS

Billboards play an important role in our ongoing strategy. Annual placements in Montana and South Dakota elevate brand awareness and drive visitors to Billings, Montana’s Trailhead. Additional boards will also be designed and placed for local citywide events like the GWRRA Wing Ding 38 Rally, August 31 – September 3, 2016, or campaign specific initiatives as deemed appropriate.

Billboard placements for consideration 2016-17: In Wyoming between Spearfish and Sheridan, Visit Billings will consider placing summer billboards that contradict *Wyoming Tourism* messaging that “Route 16 is faster, prettier.” The objective is to encourage travel along Warrior Trail 212, and through Billings, Montana’s Trailhead to Yellowstone National Park.

AD CHANNEL	DESCRIPTION
<p>Rapid City, South Dakota</p>	 <p>A billboard with a red background. On the left, a person stands on a rocky outcrop overlooking a vast mountain valley. Text on the right reads: "BEARTOOTH HWY 212 MOST BEAUTIFUL ENTRANCE TO YELLOWSTONE". Below this is the "Visit Billings" logo and "VisitBillings.com" with a location pin icon.</p>
<p>Park City, Montana</p>	 <p>A two-panel billboard. The top panel says "ADVENTURE DEPARTS DAILY" and "Billings MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD". The bottom panel says "25 MILES AHEAD" and "VisitBillings.com".</p>
<p>Roberts, Montana</p>	 <p>A two-panel billboard. The top panel says "ADVENTURE DEPARTS DAILY" and "Billings MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD". The bottom panel says "50 MILES AHEAD" and "VisitBillings.com".</p>
<p>Billings, Montana</p>	 <p>A billboard with a sunset background. A person stands with arms raised next to a suitcase. Text includes "ADVENTURE DEPARTS DAILY", "Visit Billings MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD", and "VisitBillings.com".</p>



NEWSLETTERS

Visit Billings will continue to distribute a leisure e-newsletter to its database of opt-in subscribers. This newsletter will primarily push last minute deals and event information to the following industry trends:

- 44% of vacations taken by the affluent traveler are weekend trips. Average length of stays are shorter.
- 38% of HHI > \$125K took last minute trips within six days of booking.
- 30% of leisure travelers booked less than seven days from departure.

Additionally, Visit Billings produces an informational and educational e-newsletter for tourism partners.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Visually compelling and INSPIRING photography increases engagement across all media applications, whether it be increasing the view rate of an article, swaying a consumer's selection process or improving social media interaction. Articles containing relevant images have 94% more total views than articles without images, on average. (JuffBullas.com) Given the visual age we live in, the power of strong photography cannot be emphasized enough.

Maintaining an inventory of current Billings-specific photographs is critical in representing the destination in a relevant, fresh and compelling manner. Visit Billings makes a year-round effort to acquire imagery that supports marketing efforts, and showcases iconic Billings.

In 2016-17 Visit Billings will tap local talent for existing images and also schedule custom photo shoots to capture specific scenes, location and audience demographics to keep pace with media frequency and trends. Emphasis this FY will be placed on relevant photos with people in them experiencing the destination.

Photos will also be used on social media platforms and VisitBillings.com, and will be available to tourism organizations and partners at no charge.

WEBSITE: VisitBillings.com

VisitBillings.com will continue to serve as a tool to ORIENT and FACILITATE visitors to the region. The site is maintained regularly and provides in-depth information, maps, guides, suggested itineraries and must-sees on Billings and the area. All media placements will direct visitors to the Visit Billings home page, via a unique URL like VisitBillings.com/America. This strategy offers visibility into a person's origin for tracking and planning purposes.

Success is measured by total 'visits' to the website. For reporting purposes, any activity beyond the home page is considered a conversion. Google Analytics is used for tracking and monitoring VisitBillings.com

Total viewership numbers year over year are staggering:
Sessions: 2014: 149,636 compared to 2015: 231,949 (55% increase)
Pages: 2014: 392,048 compared to 2015: 571,426 (45% increase)
People viewed over half a million pages last year.

SCENIC DRIVE APP

The Visit Billings Scenic Drive App will be overhauled this year to refresh the content, address availability in app stores, update photography, etc. The app is loaded with must-see locations, one-click driving directions, videos, and even a handy audio feature with informative tips and background information to further enhance the user experience. These functions will be refreshed and improved.

BILLINGS GUIDEBOOK

The Billings Guidebook will continue to be produced as an advertising-free publication directing visitors to VisitBillings.com. The Guidebook is key to ORIENTING visitors to the Billings area, and FACILITATING their experience. Updated guidebooks are distributed each Memorial Day throughout Missoula, Belgrade, Billings, Great Falls and Black Hawk, South Dakota.

Visit Billings will continue to partner with fulfillment contractors like Certified Folder and MTS to ensure rapid availability of the most current Visitor Guide via rest stops, hotels and mailing.

A simplified fulfillment piece will be developed in FY17 to enhance the Guidebook. The print piece will be a smaller, lively flip book that entices the user to engage with VisitBillings.com to explore the destination further. Early planning suggests this piece could also be established as a customizable souvenir – the template of the piece could exist on VisitBillings.com and the visitor could upload his/her own photos into the template and print a photobook through a fulfillment service like Shutterfly. Once this piece is established, fewer Guidebooks will be printed.

VISIT BILLINGS VIDEO

A new promotional video will be completed for Visit Billings in FY17. The video will be completed with a heavy leisure message and will be used in all appropriate marketing opportunities to promote the destination. Shorter versions of the video will be recut to focus on different market segments, key demographics, and specific calls to action. These tools will come in to play for regional and national marketing as well as for group recruitment and social promotion.

FLY BILLINGS

Fly Billings is a highly targeted regional campaign encouraging consumers to fly out of Billings over other regional options. The campaign will run twice in the FY, in the fall ahead of the holidays and in the spring ahead of the high season. The effort drives consumers to seek “Park and Fly” options in Billings, encouraging the overnight to boost occupancy.

Extremely focused print ads have proven successful in driving traffic for campaigns that offer an inherent money savings for consumers. The nature of the “Park and Fly” creative lent itself to a campaign heavily focused in print within the designated 250 mile campaign radius. Print ads were coupled with digital placements geo-targeted to the same 250-mile radius. Utilizing a third party vendor that specializes in cross platform travel data, we were able to retarget visitors that had shown an interest or booked a plane ticket in or out of Logan Airport. In addition to the traditional print and digital aspects of the campaign, we utilized Google Adwords to capture the attention of those searching for stay and fly deals or opportunities to save on airport parking.

VISIT Billings
MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD

STAY & FLY
BILLINGS, MONTANA

BIG SKY MONTANA'S ONLY WALKABLE BREWERY DISTRICT
EXPLORE ADVENTURE CONVENIENT

#FLYBILLINGS
TRAVEL WITH EASE. MONTANA'S CITY URBAN DESTINATION

FLY THROUGH BILLINGS FOR YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE

- 1 Convenient non-stop flights serving nine major hubs
- 2 5,000+ rooms with hotels ranging from brand name chains to local historic properties
- 3 Best selection for shopping in the area paired with award-winning cuisine

BOOK NOW FOR SPECIAL HOTEL RATES:
VisitBillings.com/fly    



In 2016-17 the Visit Billings team, along with agency of record A.D. Creative, will endeavor to conduct further research into an emerging and engaging strategy.

EXPERIENTIAL ADVERTISING

Experiential marketing is a form of advertising that focuses primarily on helping consumers experience a brand in a sensory way. It triggers emotion and relational connections more than any other channel of communication. Experiential Marketing is what a brand does to get people “participating.”

The intent is to form an emotional connection between consumers and the Visit Billings brand by immersing them in a fun and memorable experience, thereby generating customer loyalty and influencing a purchase decision. The key is to incorporate multi-sensorial engagements. For example, a Caribbean destination event experience may include a steel drum player, island drinks, beach scents and a video of the island’s most enticing elements.

Visit Billings is currently participating in an interactive workgroup specifically designed to identify new associations with the City, defining its personality, emotions and unique assets. The outcome of this initiative will provide actionable insights, which will be used in the design and development of a new experiential marketing concept to make Billings tangible and memorable to the target audience.

The new experiential marketing concept may be implemented as an extension of a currently slated campaign, marketing effort in general or potentially an independent campaign effort in and of itself. With the Visit Billings marketing efforts heavily focused on the “experience of travel” on the social front as well as across traditional medias, developing new experiential environments and activations are necessary to keep the brand fresh and relevant.

MARKETING METHODS: LEISURE - GROUP TOURS

METHODS/TACTICS

- Travel Conventions and Summits
- Rocky Mountain International (RMI) Partnership
- Familiarization (FAM) Tours
- Translated Marketing Materials
- Print and Digital Advertising

Previously, the directive to Visit Billings staff from lodging partners was that each individual property would seek its group tour opportunities internally. Now, with more than 800 new sleeping rooms in the market, that approach has shifted and the Visit Billings team has been tasked with taking a more proactive approach to **build relationships** with tour operators. Efforts are essential for continued growth in this leisure segment.

In doing so, the team will present Billings as the most attractive, economic destination when group tour operators plan their Yellowstone and Montana vacations for their clientele.

Additionally, the team will work to **better define product** to best align new itinerary opportunities along the national park corridor including Mount Rushmore and Badlands National Parks in South Dakota and Bighorn Battlefield and Yellowstone National Parks in Montana and Wyoming. Strategies will also assist with **better communication** of Billings as Montana's path to or from Yellowstone and other popular attractions for the national and international tour operator.

TRAVEL CONVENTIONS & SUMMITS

Attendance to key group travel conventions like the U.S. Travel Association's IPW and Go West Summit will be utilized to better align Billings with international tour operators whom are looking for product in the western United States including, but not-limited to, access to Yellowstone and southeast Montana attractions.

FAMILIARIZATION (FAM) TOURS

The Visit Billings team will work with entities including the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development in order to combine efforts for FAM tour opportunities. FAMs allow Visit Billings staff and local tourism partners to host decision makers allowing them to enjoy the attractions and offerings provided in Billings. FAMs ultimately help better position Billings as a valuable stopover destination.

RMI PARTNERSHIPS

Visit Billings will also foster existing, and build new, relationships with regions that partner with Rocky Mountain International (RMI). Efforts with RMI focus primarily on the markets of Australia and New Zealand, UK, Benelux, France, Italy and Germany. RMI is also working on partnerships in the Nordic Region. Visit Billings will attend the RMI Round Up to assist with efforts in this marketplace. With Asian market opportunities growing, Billings will also be promoted as an ideal gateway choice.



TRANSLATED MARKETING MATERIALS

Visit Billings branded jump drives featuring portions of the Visit Billings website translated into Spanish, French and Mandarin, along with the English version digital Visitor's Guidebook and Promotional Video will be distributed at conventions and summits as appropriate.

Parts of VisitBillings.com are accessible in Spanish, French and Mandarin. A German translation is coming soon.

PRINT AND DIGITAL ADVERTISING

The team will also work with its Agency of Record, AD Creative Group, to strategically place creative marketing in publications to assist with brand lift for Montana's Trailhead, including but not limited to the following:

PUBLICATION	DESCRIPTION
Group Travel Leader Magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long regarded as the industry's most trusted voice, The Group Travel Leader is published 10 times per year and is read by more than 20,000 travel buyers and industry professionals in print, and another 36,000 in its digital edition.
Group Tour Magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of Group Tour Media, the world's largest travel resource for the group travel industry. Distributed to 15,000+ group tour planners across the United States and Canada, including ABA, NTA and OMCA operators.
Leisure Group Travel Magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published 6x per year, serves group travel marketplace. Include lead-gen component.
NTA National Tour Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leading association for travel professionals serving customers traveling to/from/within North America.
Trip Planner Magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reaches group leaders and NTA tour operators.
Courier Magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> #1 travel-trade publication mailed to over 15,000 tour operators and travel buyers.
Best of USA Directory (annual directory)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The only U.S. based trade association approved by the China National Tourism Administration. Distributed to leisure travel professionals in China. Print circulation 5,000.

YOUR TRAILHEAD TO MONTANA'S BIG SKY COUNTRY

EXPERIENCE SCENIC BEARTOOTH HIGHWAY TO YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

Shaped by the Yellowstone River and sheltered by the sandstone Rimrocks, Billings is Montana's City. Provide your group tour a place of forever views, history and adventure right out your hotel door. Step back in time at Little Bighorn Battlefield, sample craft beer and local spirits in Montana's only walkable brewery district, and take in the stunning views of what has been called "the most beautiful drive in America," the Beartooth Highway, just 60 miles from Billings. The fresh mountain air and forever views will follow you no matter where your travels take you. Include Billings, Montana's Trailhead as part of your Yellowstone tour today.

PLAN NOW:
VisitBillings.com/leisuregroup

VisitBillings.com
 MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD

MOUTHWATERING BREWS AND SCENIC VIEWS

VISIT Billings
 MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD

EXPERIENCE MONTANA'S CITY

Savor distinct, award-winning cuisine, truly local flavor and Montana's only walkable brewery district before delighting in what has been called "the most beautiful drive in America," the Beartooth Highway, just 60 miles away. Billings is regionally positioned to provide your group tour an ideal hub to access forever views, history and adventure throughout your visit.

The fresh mountain air and forever views will follow you no matter where your travels take you. Include Billings, Montana's Trailhead as part of your tour today.

PLAN NOW

STEFAN CATTARIN, VISIT BILLINGS SALES MANAGER
 406.245.4111 E stefan@visitbillings.com
VisitBillings.com/nta

MARKETING METHODS: TWO-WHEELED MARKET

Two wheeled travelers are an extension of the Leisure Market. In addition to city-wide rallies and group tours, efforts are made to attract the individual rider seeking wide open space and western pace.

PRINT AND DIGITAL ADVERTISING

Print continues to reach boomer riders who tend to read issues cover-to-cover. All placements target male and female motorcycle enthusiasts. The addition of digital offers a cost-effective means to include a younger demographic, and round out an integrated approach.

The “#1 Motorcycling Road in America” designation will be prominently featured in all placements. Copy includes relatable terminology like, “kick start” your adventure. “Big Sky...” reference remains the common headline, and will be customized per publication. Social media icons and vanity URLs are utilized throughout.

PUBLICATION	DESCRIPTION
RoadRUNNER Magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on touring and travel topics most important to motorcyclists, promoting cities with specific, targeted editorial highlighting local flavor.
Rider Magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A monthly publication for passionate motorcycle riders.
American Motorcyclist Magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A monthly magazine dedicated to the motorcycling lifestyle, and published by the American Motorcyclist Association.
Biker Incite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most sought out informational motorcycle rally vendor and event maps.
Motorcycling Montana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive guide to touring Montana, with routes, text, maps and photos organized by tourism regions. • Published once every three years.
Sturgis Buffalo Chip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated packages reach rally consumers across multiple media platforms. • BuffaloChip.com with over 2.5mm page views. • Gazette Sturgis News is a go-to guide and the official souvenir program 100,000 copies printed reaching 502,000 readers. • Jumbotron video daily effective circulation 9,100.
BMW Motorcycle Magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to “Made in Germany” content sets BMW Motorcycle apart. • Published quarterly. Readers are passionate about BMWs, informed and affluent. They tend to skew 35+ years.
Wing World Magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With circulation exceeding 41,000 copies, an average issue features top-quality touring stories and color photos, editorials, technical information and human-interest features • The demographics of this publication are unique in that not only are readers motorcyclists, they are generally long-distance/touring motorcyclists who ride an average of at least 100-plus miles per day, mostly on the weekend and mostly on two wheels.

HARLEY THEME

**YOUR TRAILHEAD FOR A GREAT ESCAPE TO
BIG SKY COUNTRY**

**PROUD HOST OF THE UPCOMING
2015 BMW MOA RALLY**

Experience Montana's truly local flavor cruising the back roads and wide open spaces of Big Sky Country. The fresh mountain air and forever views will follow you from the sandstone rimrocks to the switchbacks of the **BEARTOOTH HIGHWAY, VOTED BY AMA MAGAZINE AS THE #1 MOTORCYCLING ROAD IN AMERICA!** Kick-start your adventure in Billings, Montana's Trailhead.

Plan your great escape today:
VisitBillings.com/rider

Visit Billings
MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD



GOLD WING (GWRRA) THEME

WING 38 DING

BLAZIN
BILLINGS The MONTANA
BEARTOOTH
AUG 31 - SEPT 3, 2016

Visit Billings
MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD

BIG SKY COUNTRY IS WAITING

WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU IN AUGUST

- Experience Montana's truly local flavor framed by the sandstone Rimrocks
- Take in the fresh mountain air and forever views of Big Sky Country
- Blaze the switchbacks of the Beartooth Highway, voted by AMA magazine as the #1 Motorcycling Road in America!

PLAN NOW: VisitBillings.com/wingding



MARKETING METHODS: MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS

METHODS/TACTICS

- Mining Sales Leads
- Tradeshows/Sales Missions/Site Inspections
- Newsletters and e-Communications
- VisitBillings.com/meet
- Incentives
- Digital and Hard-Copy Thank You Notes
- Enlist Local Support – “Meet Local”
- Print and Digital Advertising

Billings plays a viable role in the **Montana Bucket List** leisure mindset, and this rings true throughout the destination’s Meetings and Conventions Recruitment efforts as well. Montana’s Trailhead offers ample, flexible meeting space, dozens of hotels including six convention accommodating properties, quality air service, easy connectivity with Interstates 90 and 94 merging as well as the scenic beauty of the west, dream of the genuine frontier, bucket list adventures and the friendliness of the true Montana way.

The goal of the Visit Billings Sales Team is to **‘Bring it to Billings.’** Montana’s Trailhead is a strong west region destination for meetings and conventions. Staff will continue to **build relationships** with key event planners and participate in industry tradeshows that will cultivate and foster new and return meeting and convention business. Staff will also cultivate relationships with players in specific industries that align well with Billings and introduce them to the destination as a gathering option for groups, large or small.

MINING SALES LEADS

While Billings’ urban amenities and experiences on the edge of the Beartooth Pass and southeast Montana attractions like Pompeys Pillar, Bighorn Canyon and Little Bighorn Battlefield help secure national rallies for the destination, subgroups from large rallies will be courted and invited to experience Billings. Leads will be mined and relationships with proper planners and association directors will be established/nurtured for potential booking opportunities.

TRADESHOWS / SALES MISSIONS / SITE INSPECTIONS

Visit Billings sales staff will attend some large tradeshows, but by and large, the focus will be on building strong relationships with the planners Billings can serve best – those with attendance of 400 persons or fewer. Visit Billings Sales Manager will attend

supplier hosted conventions and tradeshows with small intimate attendance, giving Billings a stronger presence in front of buyers. Convention sales efforts will focus on driving interest with the target list of planners focusing closely on regional and state groups and associations to secure new and repeat business for the destination’s six convention hotels. Site inspections and meeting planner FAM tours will be organized when appropriate.

NEWSLETTERS AND E-COMMUNICATIONS

Relationship building with buyer contacts will be fostered with monthly connections including newsletters and promotions, both hard copy and electronic.

VISITBILLINGS.COM/MEET

The Meetings & Conventions landing page is housed on VisitBillings.com/meet and is continually updated to accommodate and serve planners, prospects and attendees. There is a creative through line in design, messaging and colors/fonts – so after the hustle and bustle of a trade show or meet/greet, planners visiting VisitBillings.com/meet will know they’ve come to the right place, Billings, Montana’s Trailhead.



INCENTIVES

In an ongoing effort to reach and inspire planners to consider Billings as an unforgettable meeting destination, periodic incentive mailings will be deployed to qualified databases. As a kick off to New Year 2015, the Visit Billings team conceived a lively incentive to book by June and receive a complimentary welcome reception. A sturdy card that could double as a coaster of sorts was mailed, complete with the offer, contact information, and a visual to ORIENT planners to Montana. Similar tactics, deemed appropriate, will be launched in FY17.

DIGITAL THANK YOU NOTE

The Visit Billings sales team focuses on customer service at all times. In this segment, the team will continue to use the Digital Thank You Note, which allows an immediate secondary point of impression. The Sales Manager will use the tool as a follow up to prospective clients, with the ability to upload attachments that might be of interest to the particular party – for example, “Hi Bill, so nice meeting you. Attached is the trails map we discussed!” The system will also send reminders to the Sales Team after a designated period of time to assist in closing the sales loop.

The Digital Thank You will also be used as a tool to support the Visit Billings strategic goal of Improved Visitor Experience. For specific conventions where applicable, the Sales Team will send a note upon

registration thanking attendees for registering and choosing Billings – for example, “Hello Cindy, we’re looking forward to hosting you this summer!”

The template features adaptive technology to ensure all content populates properly from desktop to tablet to phone. In addition to generating additional client touchpoints, the intelligent system maintains a database of all relevant information including:

- › Where you met the contact
- › Contact name
- › Contact email
- › Related project
- › Body Copy
- › Sent attachments

Staff can also upload attachment files.

ENLIST LOCAL SUPPORT – ‘MEET LOCAL’

FY16 realized the successful launch of the organization’s second Meet Local program. This ‘Bring it to Billings’ focused campaign helped educate and encourage members of local associations, Rotary clubs, sports leagues, civic groups and also hobby enthusiasts, to assist the Sales Manager in the recruitment of prospective meetings and conventions for the destination. In FY17, the program will continue to be scheduled and offered to the appropriate audiences.



PRINT AND DIGITAL ADVERTISING

Visit Billings will work with its Agency of Record, A.D. Creative Group, to strategically place fresh digital and print Meeting and Convention Recruitment focused creative campaigns with appropriate outlets. Campaigns will work to inspire with imagery, while orienting planners with Billings, Montana showcasing where the city sits in the region. General locations of nearby points of interest will also be highlighted along with the DMO services offered.

A color photo of the Visit Billings Sales Manager will be included on Meetings advertising, business cards, website and collateral, to offer familiarity and personalization for contact information.

PUBLICATION	DESCRIPTION
<p>Smart Meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry’s leading monthly B2B publication, reaching more than 60,000 meeting professionals who are decision makers. • Smart Events – one-on-one appointment meetings held monthly across North America.
<p>Small Market Meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The only meetings industry publication that covers 2nd and 3rd tier cities in every issue. • Mailed to more than 10,000 meeting planners nationwide. • Published monthly.
<p>cVent Supplier Network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cVent Destination Guide and cVent Supplier Network allow suppliers to connect with more than 67,000 planner users. • Provides tools to research destinations, find venues and information.
<p>CSAE Colorado Society of Association Executives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-profit professional organization for managers in Colorado. • Over 400 members representing more than 270 organizations.
<p>ASAE American Society of Association Executives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represents more than 21,000 association executives and industry partners representing more than 9,300 organizations.
<p>Collinson Media & Events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading source of content for meetings professionals in every group market segment. • Connect Magazine – association and specialty group meeting professionals • Collaborate Magazine – corporate and incentive meetings professionals



EXPERIENCE A **BUCKET LIST** STATE

For Your Next Meeting Destination

MONTANA'S ONLY WALKABLE BREWERY DISTRICT

DIRECT FLIGHTS

FINANCIAL \$ INCENTIVES

LODGING TAX IS HALF THE NAT. AVERAGE

CONFIDENTIAL RFP DISTRIBUTION

REGIONALLY POSITIONED

CHIEF PLENTY COUPS STATE PARK

AUTHENTIC WEST

BLUE RIBBON TROUT FISHING

BILLINGS POMPEYS PILLAR

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

LITTLE BIGHORN BATTLEFIELD NATIONAL MONUMENT

QUALITY AIR SERVICE

BEARTOOTH HIGHWAY

MONTANA



Schedule a personalized site visit today:

STEFAN CATTARIN
VISIT BILLINGS SALES MANAGER
O 406.245.4111 E stefan@visitbillings.com
VisitBillings.com/meet

VISIT *Billings*[®]

MONTANA'S  TRAILHEAD

MARKETING METHODS: SPORTS EVENTS

METHODS/TACTICS

- Mine for Sports Leads
- Develop and Support Sports Events
- Tradeshows and Symposium
- Cultivate and Maintain Relationships
- Engage Local Sports Enthusiasts
- Print and Digital Advertising

MINE FOR SPORTS LEADS

Visit Billings will continue to mine for opportunities that allow the destination to showcase its sport's strengths. At the same time, the future of the sports segment will be analyzed by a sports facility feasibility study and conversations about sports sales leadership will continue.

DEVELOP AND SUPPORT SPORTS EVENTS

The team will work to develop and support events, tournaments and championships from youth and amateur sports to NCAA contests. Billings, as a regional sports events leader, will market and promote area sports venues, hotels, team-friendly restaurants, and fan-friendly attractions in order to retain and increase sports visitation.

TRADESHOWS AND SYMPOSIUMS

Efforts will also focus on leveraging resources to prospect contacts and learn more about the evolving segment including travel to national sports tradeshows like the National Association of Sports Commissions (NASC) Annual Symposium. Such commitments will allow staff to gain more insight on the business of cultivating sports events, bids, booking business and managing sporting events.

CULTIVATE AND MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS

Visit Billings holds its relationships with athletic department officials, MetraPark officials, sports planners and tournament directors in high regard. Brainstorming with these individuals on state and regional levels, to maximize the success of existing events while looking toward the future to embark on new opportunities is essential.

ENGAGE LOCAL SPORTS ENTHUSIASTS

Visit Billings will continue to engage local sports enthusiasts and supporters to assist in a 'Bring it to Billings' mentality and fulfill hospitality needs. Billings is positively a sports-infatuated community full of residents who are interested in watching competition and helping volunteer in the best interest and execution of tournaments, meets, and an overall positive sports environment. Midland Roundtable members and local alumni groups are major contributors in developing and nurturing this segment. Visit Billings staff will continue to build relationships with such groups in order to establish Billings as a community that envelopes its sports opportunities with genuine hospitality and enthusiasm. Examples of this are the MHSA Hospitality Rooms during sanction high school events, including the All Class State High School Wrestling Tournament held at Rimrock Auto Arena at MetraPark every winter and engaging the community troops, if you will, during site inspections for potential sports business as was witnessed during the Big Sky Conference Site Selection Committee Visit in March 2015.



PRINT AND DIGITAL ADVERTISING

Marketing efforts will make way to build brand lift with sports-focused creative and strategic buys in sports publications. The team will also foster designations like Reader's Choice Awards, which help Billings stand out on the regional and national platforms.

PUBLICATION	DESCRIPTION
Sports Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly magazine produced to help planners of sporting events be more effective, informed and successful with their events.
Sports Destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bi-monthly magazine dedicated to sports events and travel, distributed directly to executives, event planners, tournament directors, and decision makers. Focus is team and individual events and tournaments, including amateur to professional – youth to adult.
Sports Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly magazine read by more than 17,000 sports industry decision makers. Serves organizers of sporting events of all types at all levels.
NASC National Association of Sports Commissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The only trade association for the sports tourism industry, also the most trusted resource for sports commissions, convention and CVBs.

YOUR TRAILHEAD TO TROPHY CELEBRATIONS

5,000+ HOTEL ROOMS • AWARD WINNING CUISINE

PRACTICE COMPETE CELEBRATE

DIRECT FLIGHTS BILLINGS

BIG SKY COUNTRY MONTANA BEAR TOOTH HIGHWAY

WITH EXCEPTIONAL AIR SERVICE AND ACCESSIBILITY, IT'S EASY TO PLAN YOUR NEXT SPORTS EVENT.

From hosting 10,000 high school wrestlers annually to the largest state games in the region, Billings offers a wide range of venues for virtually any sport. Couple this with exceptional air service and diverse hotel options, and Billings is your ideal sports setting.

While you're here, travel to America's first national park via the breathtaking Beartooth Highway or take in history on the grounds at the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument.

Throughout your stay, rest up in one of the city's more than 5,000 hotel rooms. Enjoy team-friendly restaurants and attractions and accessible sports venues, all of which make Billings an ideal sports destination.

Score big and host your next sports event in "Montana's City," Billings, Montana's Trailhead.

Plan your event today: Visit Billings.com/sportsevents
Or contact Alex Tyson with Visit Billings:
Alex@visitbillings.com, 406.869.3726

Visit Billings MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD



SOCIAL MEDIA

Approximately one fifth of leisure travelers worldwide turn to one of the multiple social media platforms for inspiration when choosing hotels, vacation activities, attractions and restaurants within their travel planning.

Visit Billings will continue to enhance audiences and engagement on all social channels (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest and YouTube) in an effort to build brand awareness, loyalty and engagement for **Billings, Montana's Trailhead**. Social media icons will be included in all media placements, and a social media component will be integrated into individual regional campaigns.

Boosted posts coupled with organic content have been proven to **build followers**. We'll continue the use of beautiful imagery, event awareness, fresh video content and **pushing links** to our other social media and landing pages when possible. 2016-17 will also see a renewed focus on the "social aspects" of social media. Well timed posts, containing relevant content and speaking in the voice of our brand, will encourage our followers to experience and share the restaurants, shopping, events and other activities that garner engagement from users on multiple platforms. Sharing links with social media influencers and strategic partners with large social followings will support the effort to build. In harmony with sharing content socially, additional content creation and the **development of a blog** is on the radar for 2016-17.

A series of different strategies will be used including giveaways and merit badge incentives to boost engagement and dollars will be strategically utilized to promote pages and boost posts when appropriate.

Visit Billings is committed to growing a presence on the following channels:

- › www.Facebook.com/billingsmt
- › www.Twitter.com/MTsTrailhead
- › www.YouTube.com/BillingsCVB
- › www.Pinterest.com/visitbillings
- › www.Instagram.com/MontanasTrailhead
- › #VisitBillings
- › #DriveToBillings

FACEBOOK

Visit Billings will continue to rely on social media heavy-lifter, Facebook. The platform allows the team to share various types of content including links, stories, events, video and beautiful photos of Montana's Trailhead. Among the existing social channels of today's

digital landscape, Facebook provides the potential for the largest vertical growth. Facebook reports that more people share travel and vacation photos on their pages than anything else, creating immense opportunity to introduce our brand to multiple consumers that admittedly are influenced by others' vacation habits. Success will be tracked through watching new likes, post reach, and engagement on posts.

#VISITBILLINGS

Hashtags are a great way to organize and track social media updates and find others who are talking about the same things you're talking about. Visit Billings launched #VisitBillings in 2015, and will continue to focus on building it in the year ahead.

By increasing and encouraging hashtag use, brand awareness increases across all segments – from leisure to sports to meetings. #VisitBillings will be prominently featured on advertising, signage, handouts, banners, and media to reinforce the Billings brand and stay front-of-mind as a modern and dynamic destination. To further engage fans, followers, and photographers, photos posted with the #VisitBillings could have a chance to be featured in Visit Billings marketing. Finally, the hashtag also gives the Visit Billings Social Media team a way to aggregate new content that can be shared on other social media channels.

INSTAGRAM

Being visual and using breathtaking images encourages vacation planning, therefore, efforts will increase on Instagram as it gains popularity and creates a natural environment for Visit Billings to interact with its fan base. It's inherently visual nature supports the largely scenic aspects of our regional/national campaigns and enhances the use of Montana visuals as "one of the last best places."

In FY17, Visit Billings will have local celebrities take turns doing "Instagram Takeovers" to create a buzz in the community. Social influencers will be recruited to explore the hidden gems of Billings and the area around Billings to share with their large social following.

TWITTER

Twitter typically works best for brands that generate enough content to post 10- 20 times per day. The Visit Billings team will study how other destinations utilize Twitter in an effort to possibly develop an improved, efficient usage strategy.

Instagram and Twitter engagement will be tracked via the success of #VisitBillings and number of new followers.

PINTEREST

More than one in six visitors to travel sites are also Pinterest users. Because of its visually oriented interface, Pinterest has been touted as having more promise for travel marketers than other emerging social media sites - and even some of the established ones (eMarketer.com).

Visit Billings will leverage curated content from other sources as well as our own. We will credit as needed and allow this venue to be an opportunity to be a brand leader connecting our followers to both our and other relevant content.

YOUTUBE

FY17 will include a newly produced video for Visit Billings. The video will be viewable as one whole video, as well as shorter cut downs that can stand-alone. All of these videos will be pushed through the Visit Billings YouTube channel.

The newly produced video will be launched and heavily promoted this FY. Campaigns may reference it, social channels will feature it, and PR will work to elevate the new tool to brand enthusiasts.

VISIT BILLINGS BLOG

FY17 will see the establishment of a Visit Billings blog. Staff and guest writers will populate content on a wide variety of topics including but not limited to meetings/conventions, events, hidden gems, local favorites, top 10's, new businesses, etc.

REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Many potential visitors make decisions based on online reviews and bad reviews can end a relationship before it has even begun. The Visit Billings Social Media Team will monitor the web and select travel websites to manage potential bad reviews, and secure a positive reputation for Billings.

“FOR A TRULY EFFECTIVE SOCIAL CAMPAIGN, A BRAND NEEDS TO EMBRACE THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF MARKETING, WHICH INVOLVES BRAND DEFINITION AND CONSISTENT STORYTELLING.”

- Simon Mainwaring



PUBLICITY

METHODS/TACTICS

- Familiarization (FAM) Tours
- Relationship Building/Networking
- Creating and Amassing Content
- Seeking Editorial Opportunities

The Visit Billings Publicity Team strives to partner with MOTBD, tourism partners, and neighboring regions in promoting visitation to Billings, Montana's Trailhead. A few key tactics include the following:

FAMILIARIZATION (FAM) TOURS

FAM tours will be a continued means of showcasing Montana's Trailhead. The team will work independently and with the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD) to recruit journalists and expose them to Billings and the surrounding regions.

In addition to the leads given to Visit Billings by MOTBD, Visit Billings will reach out to journalists on prospective story ideas. When a journalist shows interest, the team will be ready to execute a fully hosted and, if desired, guided experience at Montana's Trailhead. Media gathering entities like Meltwater will assist by tracking coverage and generating leads.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING/NETWORKING

The months ahead will also focus on building relationships with social media influencers like photographers, writers, publications, and blogs with large social media followings. Such relationships benefit Billings and Montana over time with editorial generation.

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 and food and beverage publications.

CREATING AND AMASSING CONTENT

Content collection and creation will be a significant priority in FY17. The team will gather photography, video and editorial content to form and evolve blog material. Social media is at a stage where content is the key to success and relevancy. The more videos, photos, and personal stories available in our toolkit, the better the opportunity to persuade potential visitors and journalists to experience Billings.

Visit Billings will be using local photographers and videographers to build content. Such material will cover a broad spectrum of beautiful imagery with an emphasis on building in a human element that represents all aspects of the destination and experience including landscapes, food, and attractions. Visit Billings will also develop a newsroom in FY17 as a place to house content as a resource for journalists to utilize.

SEEKING EDITORIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Along with recruiting journalists to visit, learn and write about the destination, Visit Billings will also seek opportunities to submit editorial content for various publications. Relationships with big brands will be coveted in order to publish local content to large audiences. Building a relationship with local Billings365.com to publish blogs will also be leveraged.



CO-OPERATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

Visit Billings would like to participate in the following co-operative opportunities with MOTBD.

- › Visit Billings would like to continue partnering with MOTBD with any and all opportunities that are regarded appropriate – print, digital, OOH, trade shows. There is value in not only leveraging dollars toward increasing audience reach and frequency, but in the association and tie to MOTBD messaging and brand pillars.
- › Digital opportunities that hyper target a qualified audience of travelers have been heavy-lifters for Billings. Accordingly, staff will look first to those opportunities again.

Visit Billings would like to participate in the following co-operative opportunities with Neighboring Regions.

- › In the coming year, Visit Billings has plans to partner with Visit Southeast Montana on a regional print campaign to draw visitors to the area. Southeast Montana is weaker without Billings offerings, and Billings weaker without Southeast Montana offerings. It's important for the Visit Billings team to maintain a strong alliance with this valued partner.
- › Yellowstone Country, and particularly Red Lodge, is another important region where Visit Billings will continue building a relationship. Many successful FAMs and wins have been realized after team efforts between Billings and Red Lodge including the Hot Bike Tour, Outdoor Writers Association of America, BMW MOA Rally and GWRRA Wing Ding 38. The team will continue to work with Red Lodge CVB, TBID and Chamber of Commerce to bring more wins to the area. As for Yellowstone Country as a general tourism region, Billings is a gateway to the Beartooth Highway (considered part of Yellowstone Country) and Yellowstone National Park via Red Lodge. Billings is also a welcome destination for travelers coming out of the park seeking services, shopping and urban amenities. Visit Billings believes there is value in strengthening the benefits each city offers the other.
- › Glacier Country has experienced success tapping into the Asian Market. Exploring a "National Parks" play to Asia may be of interest. At the same time, Yellowstone National Park is a known asset for Chinese travelers.
- › Visit Billings will partner with MOTBD and Montana Regions/ CVBs on relevant consumer trade shows when appropriate.

- › Finally, falling in line with MOTBD's strategic goals, Billings would like to partner with the City of Billings, Chamber of Commerce, Yellowstone County, Downtown Business Association and local leaders to **Preserve the Assets and Quality of Life** in the community by maintaining productive dialogue around seeking ways to improve Billings, and our product as a year-round destination. Yellowstone Kelly Gravesite renovation efforts at Swords Rimrock Park are a perfect example of this currently.

Visit Billings has participated in the following co-operative opportunities in the past.

- › Visit Billings has and will continue to partner with MOTBD and **Visit Southeast Montana** on relevant consumer trade shows including, but not limited to, Rocky Mountain International Roundup, U.S. Travel Association's IPW and the GoWest Summit. These partnerships have proven successful in the past and are expected to be in the future.
- › In FY16, Visit Billings participated in several of the MOTBD co-op advertising opportunities including iExplore, Sojern, TripAdvisor, and Outside Magazine. Like placements will be considered in FY17.
- › **TripAdvisor** has been a trusted partner for many years, and the plan moving forward is to continue to nurture and grow the relationship. Visit Billings has had success with Trip co-ops on a national scope, we've geo-targeted regional campaigns, and recently they expanded the Visit Billings reach to include presence on the following English-language international domains.
 - › Australia .AU
 - › Canada .CA
 - › India .IN,
 - › Ireland .IE
 - › Malaysia .MY
 - › New Zealand .NZ
 - › Singapore .SG
 - › South Africa .ZA
 - › Philippines .PH
 - › U.K. .UK

MARKETING SUPPORT

STAKEHOLDERS COMMUNICATIONS

With several hotels newly operating in the Billings area and new sales teams in place, Visit Billings staff will work to continue to strengthen relationships with lodging partners. The team will increase efficiency of communications and focus on making sure hoteliers understand the mission of the organization and the organization understands the needs of each property.

RENEWAL OF THE BILLINGS TOURISM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

In 2017, the Billings Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) will need to be renewed in accordance with Montana Code of Business Improvement Districts (BID). Visit Billings staff will originate strategies to extend the duration of the TBID per a petition to renew the district which takes support from a majority of property owners in Billings proper. A renewal landing page, specific to information about the TBID, its mission and successes, will be created on the Visit Billings website to continually promote and track the progress of property owner support of the renewal campaign.

Prior to the inception of the Billings TBID, the tourism marketing budget for Billings was less than \$300,000 annually. Competitive cities, at the same time, had tourism marketing budgets exceeding three times that amount. Billings was simply unable to compete appropriately as a destination marketing organization (DMO). The Convention and Visitors Bureau funds were solely from the Montana State Lodging Tax. In 2007, the Billings Chamber, together with a handful of forward thinking lodging partners from Billings, courted the Montana Legislature successfully passing the option for communities to operate Tourism Business Improvement Districts via a governing body (the City of Billings for the local TBID) and assess visitors to raise more marketing dollars. Billings successfully established Montana's first TBID. Today there are 17 such entities in Montana.

The TBID was a game changer for Montana tourism. Protecting and renewing the Billings TBID will be a crucial piece of the future tourism industry in Montana's Trailhead. Without it, Billings would revert to a tourism marketing budget less than \$320,000, jobs would be lost and Billings would lose its market share and placement as an established and successful destination.

SERVICES

A top priority for Visit Billings' staff is first-class convention services and also total meeting satisfaction for the planner and attendee, alike. This is crucial to ensure the organization meets the needs of meeting, convention and tournament planners, which leads to repeat visitation. Customized options for planners are important, offering a combination of items including Save the Date postcard mailings,

convention registration bags, pre and post itinerary options, to name a few. Assisting a host property with any necessary trouble-shooting to make certain all client expectations are met is also significant. Proper servicing efforts set the stage for top-notch customer service, an important goal of the Visit Billings team. Visit Billings looks forward to building the best services team in the market and possessing a name synonymous with customer service excellence.

This includes a protocol that includes, but isn't limited to:

- › At the beginning of each month, the Visit Billings Sales Manager notifies the Visitor Services Specialist regarding booked or definite meetings and/or conventions with the appropriate contact information in iDSS.
- › Services will then make contact as the point of reference for specific needs during the calendar year(s) leading up to the event. This can include Save the Date postcard mailings, Visitor Guide mailing information, tour information, etc.

This initial contact promotes a sense of graciousness for the planner/company choosing Billings, Montana's Trailhead as a destination for an event.

Finally, all Visitor Guides requests from clients and prospective travelers will be responded to in a timely manner and mailed complimentary for the best initial phase of the visitor experience surrounding Montana's Trailhead. Visit Billings will continue to partner with fulfillment contractors like Certified Folder and MTS to ensure rapid availability of the most current Visitor Guide via rest stops and hotels and mailing.

VISITOR FEEDBACK

Constructive criticism is essential to growth and learning the weaknesses in a process within an organization. In FY17, the team will contemplate the best way to execute a post-convention questionnaire that would be sent to planners and contacts upon the conclusion of an event hosted at Montana's Trailhead. Feedback would be shared and acted upon appropriately.

TRAILHEAD TOURISM AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

The Trailhead Tourism Ambassador (TTA) Program will continue as Visit Billings partners with hotels to ensure front desk and sales staff are educated appropriately regarding the local industry and Billings as a tourism destination. This includes insight on what attractions are available in Billings and across Southeast Montana and Yellowstone Country Tourism Regions. TTA sessions will be offered every fall and spring to grow and maintain a true understanding of the destination for frontline employees.

PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS - SWAG

When appropriate, Visit Billings team members will be decked out in Visit Billings gear representing the destination and DMO accordingly. Logo-wear for staff displays uniformity and allows our high performing team to be walking ambassadors for the brand.

According to Fast Company, promotional items are an affordable means to deliver a message repeatedly, over time. Freebies also trigger the reciprocity effect, a conditional response to return the kindness of a gift – which can lead to repeat business and referrals. When delivered personally, promotional products offer a way to connect 1:1 with a target audience.

When Visit Billings hosted the NCAA D2 Cross Country meeting in November 2014, the team was decked out in Visit Billings gear. They displayed uniformity, and were walking ambassadors for the brand.

Visit Billings will purchase durable quality products that will last.

A few ideas include, but are not limited to:

- Clothing: T-shirts, performance fleece, trucker hats
- Business: Luggage tags, custom pens, USB drives
- Brew Tour related: beer openers, airline bottles, 2-packs of beer
- Travel: toothbrushes, laundry bag, smart phone chargers







BUDGETS

BUDGETS

STATE LODGING TAX BUDGET (CVB)

ADVERTISING TOTAL **\$230,150**

Leisure Advertising	\$55,150
Meeting/Convention Advertising	\$25,000
Co-Op Leisure/Joint Venture Adv.	\$30,000
Agency Retainer	\$45,000
TripAdvisor	\$26,000
Social Media/PR	\$30,000
Sports Marketing	\$18,500
Group Tour Marketing	\$500

STATE FULFILLMENT TOTAL **\$25,000**

Fulfillment by Contractor	\$17,500
Postage	\$7,500

MEETINGS/STAFF TOTAL **\$3,050**

Meeting Expenses	\$1,550
Staff Expenses	\$1,500

OPPORTUNITY TOTAL **\$10,000**

PRINTED/DIGITAL MATERIAL TOTAL **\$1,000**

2/4 Wheel Map	\$500
Historic/Loop Map	\$500

RESEARCH TOTAL **\$9,700**

Smith Travel Research Report	\$4,500
EmpowerMINT Database Access	\$5,200

PUBLICITY TOTAL **\$17,500**

IPW FAM Tour	\$5,000
Journalists/Influencers	\$5,000
Photo Library	\$7,500

SALES TOTAL **\$1,500**

Attendance Building	\$500
Site Visit/Inspections	\$1,000

VISITOR CENTER TOTAL **\$1,100**

Toll Free Line	\$1,100
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FILM RECRUITMENT TOTAL **\$1,000**

Film Incentives	\$1,000
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ADMINISTRATIVE & OVERHEAD TOTAL **\$75,000**

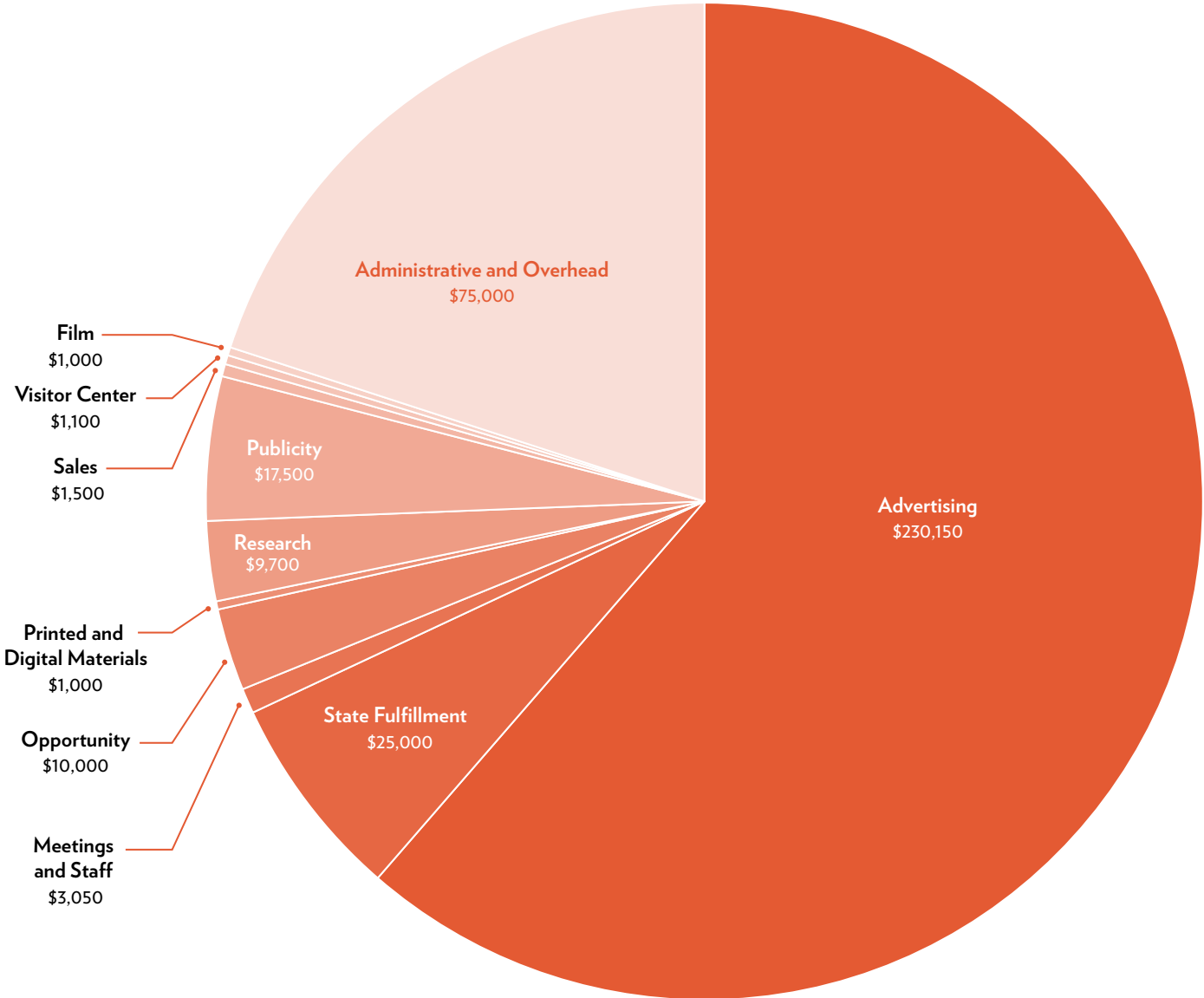
CVB TOTAL EXPENSES **\$375,000**

Should lodging tax revenues decrease, the following categories would be reduced by 10%: Administrative Expenses, Advertising, Opportunity, Printed/Digital Materials, and Publicity.

Figures are projected; final figures to be determined



STATE LODGING TAX DOLLARS (CVB)



Projected Lodging Tax Income: \$375,000

Projected Carryover: TBD

TOTAL LODGING TAX BUDGET: \$375,000

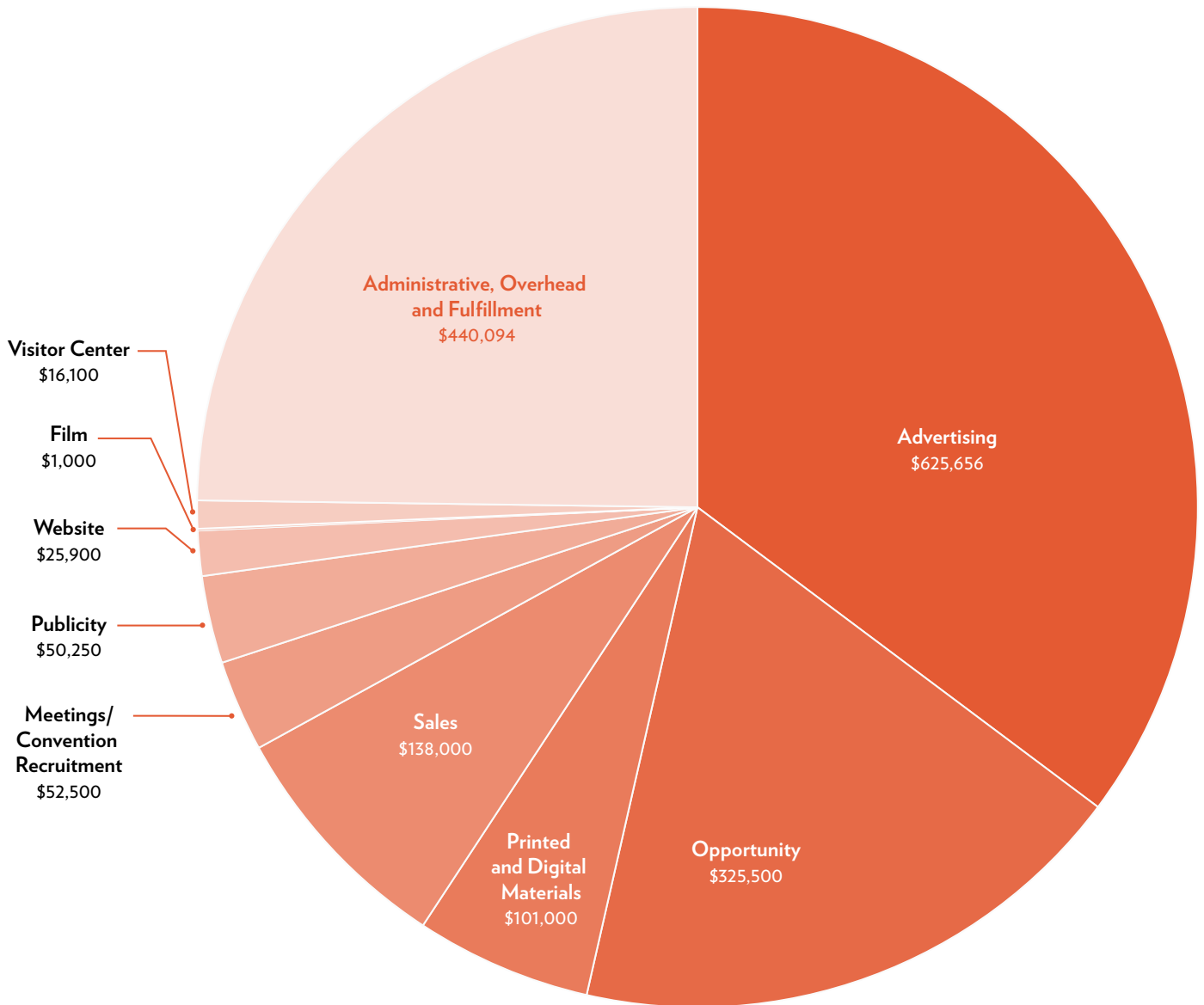
**TOURISM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT
DISTRICT BUDGET (TBID)**

REVENUES TOTAL	\$1,803,000
Collections	\$1,733,000
Carryover	\$70,000
MARKETING TOTAL	\$1,377,906
Advertising	\$625,656
Opportunity	\$325,500
Printed & Digital Materials	\$101,000
Sales	\$138,000
Meetings/Convention Recruitment	\$52,500
Publicity	\$50,250
Website	\$25,900
Film	\$1,000
Visitor Center	\$16,100
ADMINISTRATIVE TOTAL	\$440,094
Fulfillment and Overhead	\$86,269
Staff Expenses & Benefits:	\$353,825

TBID TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,803,000
Reserves Total as of June 30, 2016	\$175,000
Contract Commitments as of June 30, 2016	\$75,000



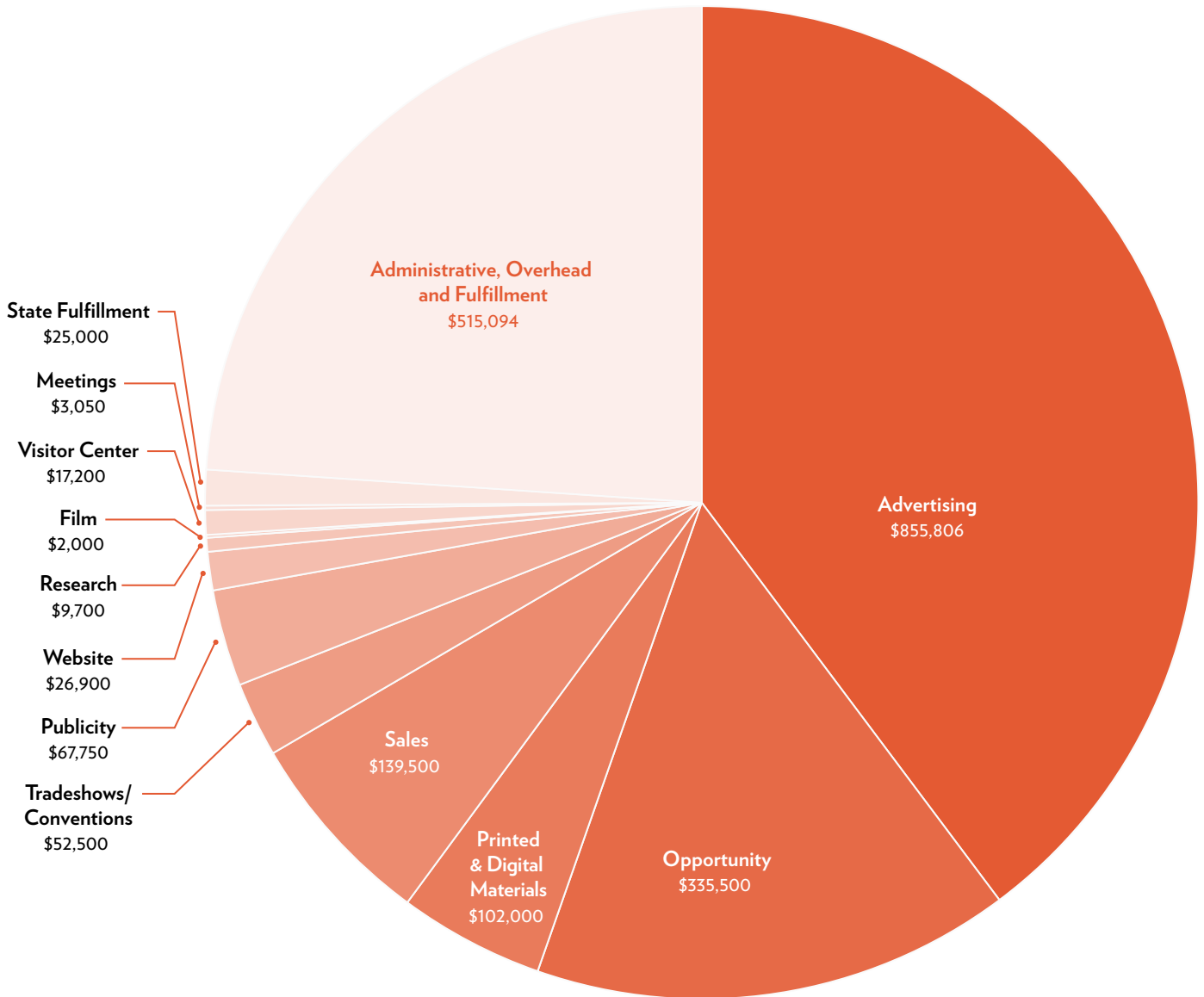
TOURISM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT DOLLARS (TBID)



Projected TBID Income: \$1,733,000
Projected Carryover: \$70,000
TOTAL TBID BUDGET: \$1,803,000

*Current restricted reserve funds \$175,000.
Contract Commitments \$75,000.
Figures are projected; final figures to be determined.*

COMBINED TOTAL TOURISM BUDGET ILLUSTRATION (CVB + TBID)



Lodging Tax Budget: \$375,000

TBID Budget: \$1,803,000

TOTAL VISIT BILLINGS BUDGET: \$2,178,000

Figures are projected; final figures to be determined.



VISIT *Billings*[®]

MONTANA'S  TRAILHEAD

 VisitBillings.com

it's
Billings
Chamber of Commerce

Visit Billings is managed by the Billings Chamber of Commerce
2016