

A person in a green jacket and purple helmet is climbing a large, textured rock face on the left side of the image. The background shows a vast landscape of rocky cliffs and pine trees under a cloudy sky at sunset or sunrise. The overall tone is warm and adventurous.

FORGE  YOUR
VISIT *Billings*
OWN  PATH

FY24 MARKETING PLAN & BUDGET



In 2021, visitors to Montana spent

\$5.15 BILLION

at retailers, restaurants and bars, gas stations, and lodging businesses, to name a few.



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.

10K JOBS

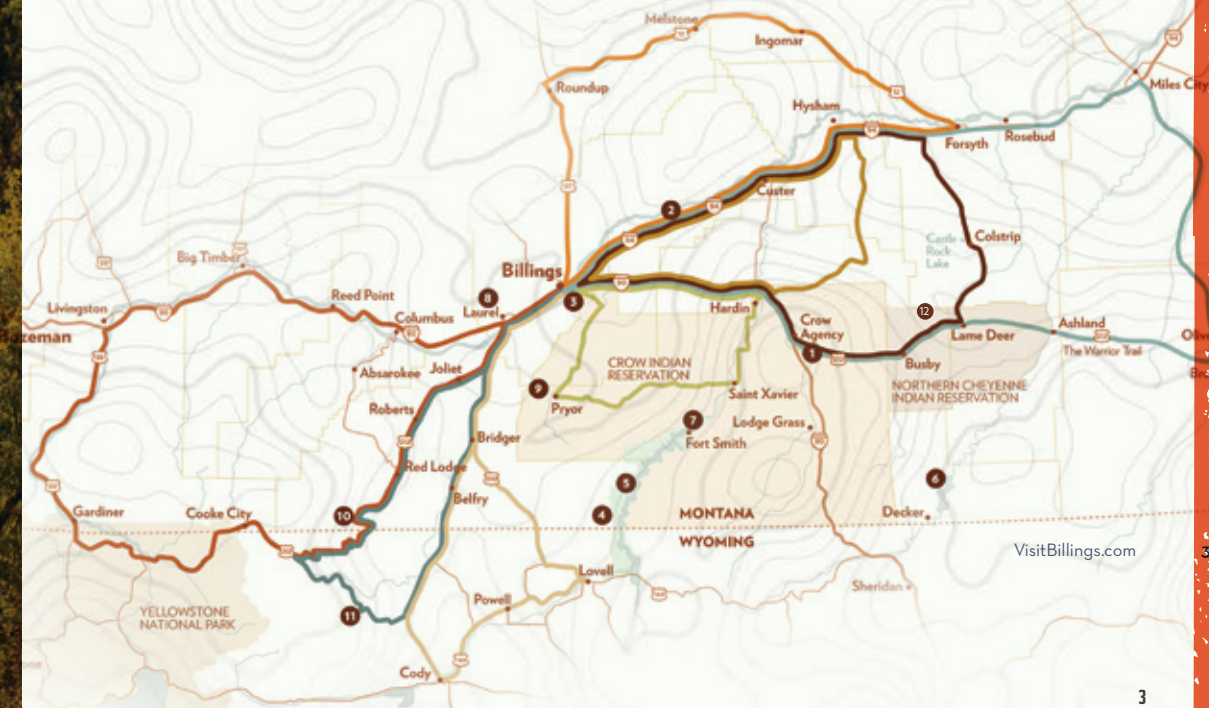
Tourism supports more than 10,000 jobs locally in the Billings' area.

2.6 MILLION

More than 2.6 million people visit Billings annually, spending \$621 million every year.

67K JOBS

Non-resident travel supports nearly 67,000 jobs in Montana and lowers the tax burden on every Montana household an average of \$866/year.



IN BILLINGS, THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY FUELS EVERY INDUSTRY, WHILE EVERY INDUSTRY FUELS THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY.

As a destination marketing and management organization (DMMO), Visit Billings promotes the destination and all its offerings, recruits meetings and tournaments, and helps to grow existing events. When Visit Billings markets and sells Billings as a preferred travel destination, businesses in every corner of Yellowstone County across all sectors grow and foster the local economy.

Tourism enhances the overall quality of life by helping support the local business community while also saving households nearly \$900 in taxes annually. The \$621 million that visitors spend in our local economy annually is not an accidental impact. It's the return on investment of marketing and sales strategies of the Visit Billings leadership, staff, and partners.

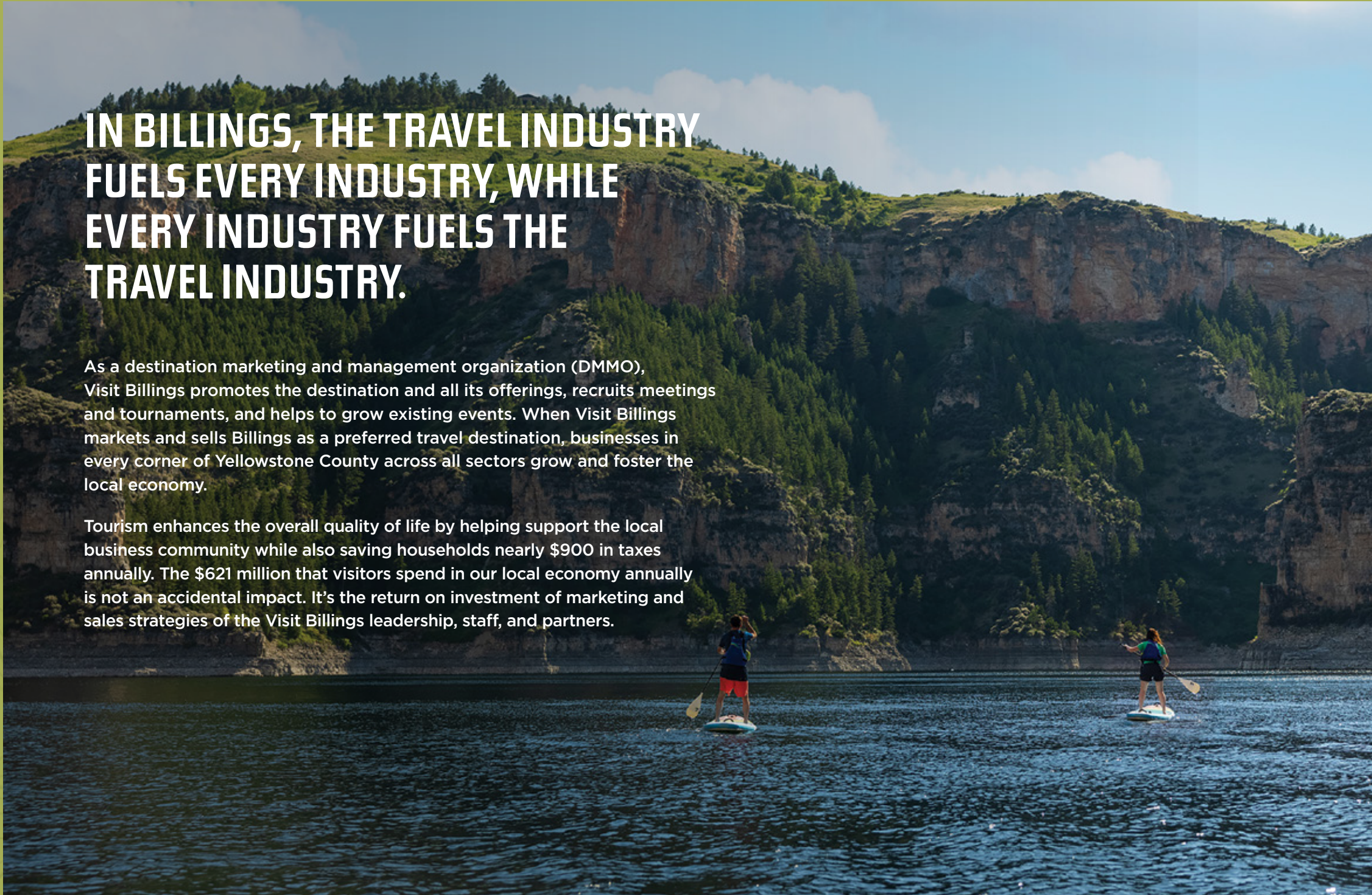


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WHY BILLINGS?

BILLINGS IS MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD

Shaped by the Yellowstone River and sheltered by the sandstone Rimrocks, Billings is a place of forever views and forever memories, where urban amenities and modern conveniences meet the edge of the genuine frontier, and the adventure of the untamed wilderness and history are at your front door. Conveniently positioned in southeast Montana as the largest city between Calgary and Denver, Spokane and Minneapolis, Billings proudly serves a trade area serving more than 500,000 residents. 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 places in the United States including Yellowstone National Park, Bighorn Canyon, national monuments, and the Beartooth Scenic Byway make Billings an idyllic destination for connecting to the best that Montana offers.

BE AN OUTSIDER

SINCE
1882



WHO WE ARE

Visit Billings is the brand that encompasses the Billings Tourism Business Improvement District (BTBID) and the Billings Convention and Visitors Bureau (BCVB). Both organizations are managed by the Billings Chamber of Commerce. The Visit Billings team is committed to growing visitation at Montana's Trailhead.

HOW WE DO IT

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 the marketing and promotion of the city as a destination, to grow visitation and support local businesses and stakeholders.

WHAT WE DO

As a DMMO, Visit Billings is responsible for the development and growth of the tourism industry through promotion, marketing, and strategy. The staff is an extension of its stakeholders (lodging partners) working to provide sales, services, and marketing support to the local hospitality industry and tourism partners.

Visit Billings works domestically and internationally to develop and enhance sustainable tourism for the city and region in the leisure, meetings and sporting events markets. The DMMO does this by increasing awareness and engaging with consumers in both drive and flight markets, as well as with media, the travel industry, meeting and conference planners, and sports promoters with research-driven marketing programs. Marketing campaigns highlight the outdoor adventure, incredible landscapes, arts and culture, culinary and nightlife, as well as the meeting and sports facilities. Visit Billings also collaborates with Billings Logan International Airport on air service development initiatives.

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 Tax and a 4% Lodging Facility Sales Tax, for a combined 8% lodging tax.

BILLINGS TOURISM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- GEORGE MARAGOS** – Northern Hotel
- JEFF SCHOENHARD** – Kelly Inn Hotels
- JOE STUDINER** – Erck Hotels
- SHELLI MANN** – Boothill Inn & Suites
- JORDAN CLAYTON** – Home2 Suites By Hilton
- STEVE WAHRLICH** – Best Western Plus Clocktower Inn & Suites
- RON SPENCE** – Billings Hotel And Convention Center
- TOBY O'ROURKE** – Kampgrounds Of America - Ex-Officio

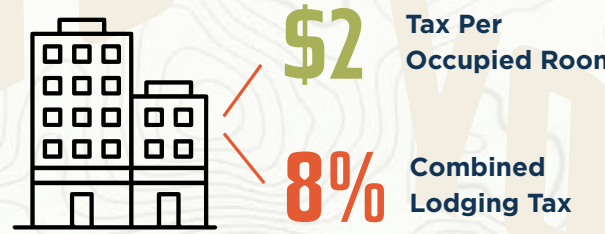
BILLINGS CHAMBER/CVB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

- JULIE SEEDHOUSE** – Century 21 Hometown Brokers
- JEREMY VANNATTA** – PayneWest Insurance
- DEBBIE POTTER** – Eide Bailly
- JESS PETERSON** – Western Skies Strategies
- TOBY O'ROURKE** – Kampgrounds of America
- NICHOLE MEHLING** – Billings Clinic
- CARMELITA DOMINGUEZ** – Montana Allergy & Asthma Specialists

THE VISIT BILLINGS TEAM

- JOHN BREWER, CAE, CATP**
President & CEO
Billings Chamber of Commerce
- ALEX TYSON, IOM, CATP**
Executive Director
Visit Billings (Billings TBID & Billings CVB)
- ALY EGGART, MSPR, CATP**
Leisure Marketing, Sales and Social Media Manager
Visit Billings
- LUKE ASHMORE, PDM, CATP**
Special Programs and Projects Manager
Visit Billings
- EVAN DECKER, PDM, CATP**
Sports Tourism Manager
Visit Billings
- MEGAN STEVENSON**
Finance Director
Billings Chamber/Visit Billings/
Visit Southeast Montana

MARKETING CAMPAIGNS HIGHLIGHT THE OUTDOOR ADVENTURE, INCREDIBLE LANDSCAPES, ARTS AND CULTURE, CULINARY AND NIGHTLIFE, AS WELL AS THE MEETING AND SPORTS FACILITIES.





ABOUT BILLINGS

Billings, population 117,000, is the county seat of Yellowstone County (pop. 167,000) and the largest city in the state. As Montana's Trailhead, it's the region's economic hub. Major industries including agriculture, energy, healthcare, finance, and education drive the local economy, and tourism is integrated into each of them.

Popular attractions include the Rimrocks or rock formations which surround much of the community and offer incredible views of the region. The city also boasts a brewery district in historic downtown Billings, restaurants featuring local flavors, Montana's only zoo and Botanical Park, contemporary and western museums, galleries, several theaters, music venues, outdoor community venues, boutique retail, and year-round festivals.

BORN IN THE SHADOWS OF THE RIMROCKS FED ON THE WATERS OF THE YELLOWSTONE

Billings is home to nearly 50 miles of multi-use trails and 24 miles of bike lanes. From the Rimrocks to the Yellowstone River, which is the longest free-flowing river in the lower 48, travelers experience the magic of Montana's Trailhead. Billings sits near the intersection of Interstates 90 and 94 and offers a first-class airport with numerous daily flights to major U.S. cities via Delta, United, American Airlines, Allegiant, Frontier, and Alaska Airlines. Regional carrier CapeAir also plays a crucial role in air travel and connectivity to eastern Montana.

Amazing summer weather and snowy winters with bluebird days offer ample opportunity for outdoor enthusiasts to experience adventures during all four seasons. Nearly 4,500 hotel rooms, flexible meeting space and sports venues are ready to accommodate any traveler or planner's needs and preferences.

BRAND MT - MARKETING MONTANA

The Tourism Marketing Bureau at the Montana Department of Commerce promotes Montana as a travel destination to potential domestic and international visitors through advertising and promotional campaigns. These strategic campaigns create awareness about Montana, generate an interest in visiting, and influence travel intention. Nationwide tourism trends, statistics from the Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) at the University of Montana, syndicated research, and the results of contracted research studies help determine a data-driven overall marketing strategy to reach target audiences and measure the success of marketing efforts to create demand for Montana as a global travel destination.

Brand MT facilitated a statewide initiative to unify, under a single brand, the diverse collective of organizations working to market Montana. The Montana Brand consists of three pillars which Visit Billings also takes into consideration for alignment:

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

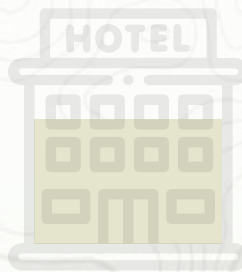
NEARLY 50 MILES OF MULTI-USE TRAILS

KEY BUSINESS METRICS

REPORTING ON PERFORMANCE GIVES US THE DATA WE NEED TO BENCHMARK TOURISM INITIATIVES YEAR-OVER-YEAR, WHILE ALLOWING US TO PROVIDE CRITICAL INSIGHTS FOR OUR STAKEHOLDERS.

STR DATA BY QUARTER

	Occupancy	Avg Daily Rate	RevPAR
Winter	56.0%	\$103.90	\$58.23
Spring	76.2%	\$125.85	\$95.93
Summer	74.3%	\$137.57	\$102.24
Fall	60.7%	\$110.03	\$66.74



ANNUAL OCCUPANCY: 68.8%

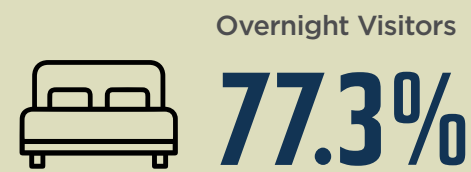
ANNUAL ADR: \$120.98

ANNUAL REVPAR: \$80.87

TARGET MARKETS

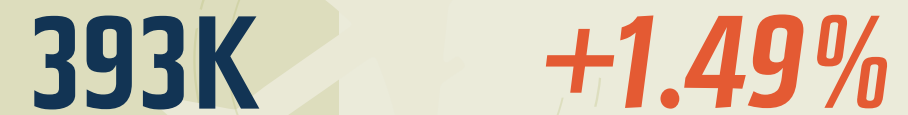


ANNUAL VISITOR TYPE*

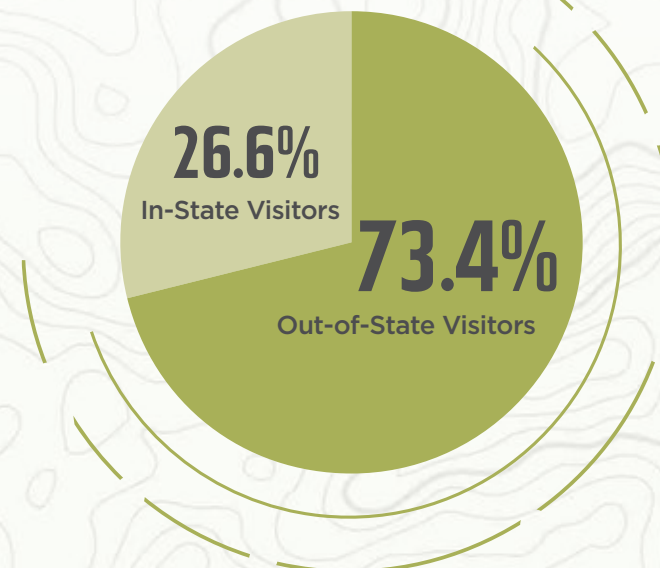


*The total percentages can exceed 100% as visitors can stay multiple days during their trip.

NUMBER OF PASSENGERS FLYING INTO BILLINGS



ORIGIN MARKETS



AVERAGE VISITOR SPENDING

\$380
Per Trip

18-24 - \$279

25-34 - \$303

35-44 - \$415

45-54 - \$369

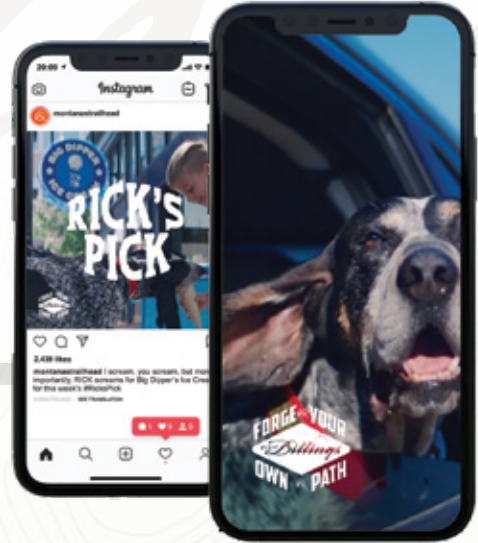
55-64 - \$370

65+ - \$335

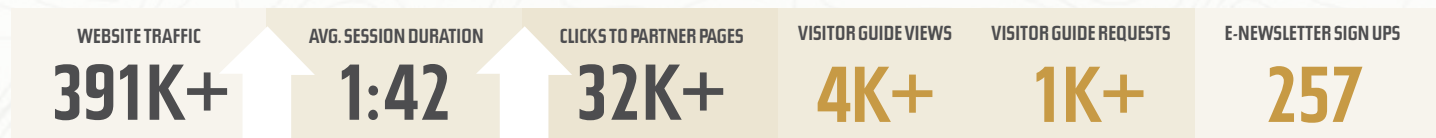
Average Visitor Spending by Age Group

2022 KEY PERFORMANCE METRICS

SPRING/SUMMER - NATIONAL ADVERTISING



WEBSITE



TOP ONLINE MARKETS FOR WEBSITE VISITATION

CHICAGO 41K DENVER 30K DALLAS 28K
BILLINGS 26K SALT LAKE CITY 20K

FALL/WINTER - REGIONAL ADVERTISING



Discovery drove over 604,000 impressions and yielded an impression conversion rate of 63%. Video provided a 1,294% lift in conversion rate.

EVENTS - REGIONAL ADVERTISING



Social had a 0.97% CTR and reached 259,958 people at an average of 4.97 frequency

PUBLIC RELATIONS



- Secured feature coverage in Road Trips for Families (<https://www.roadtripsforfamilies.com/the-great-american-road-trip-in-billings-montana/>)
- Virtual meetings introducing Billings to more than 10 journalists/influencers representing more than 5 million earned media impressions
- Secured four journalists/influencers for a press visit scheduled for May/June 2023 for outdoor adventure and Billings Brew Trail feature articles

KEY TRENDS



THE U.S. TRAVEL FOUNDATION IS FORECASTING AN INCREASE IN TRAVEL SPENDING IN 2023 COMPARED TO 2022 (AND 2019).

Destination Analysts found that Americans' excitement for travel is at record levels and they say they will prioritize leisure travel in their household income's spending - over home improvements, clothing, entertainment and even dining out in restaurants.



THERE IS A RENEWED EMPHASIS ON FOOD-FOCUSED TRAVEL

American travelers express excitement for cities (47.7%), small towns (44.8%) and national parks (41.2%), according to Destination Analysts. *Travel + Leisure* found there is a renewed emphasis on food-focused travel, wellness and self-care on vacation, and traveling off the beaten path.

A Virtuoso study found that **travelers are, on average, booking trips farther ahead for 2023 than they did back in 2019.** Experts are recommending travelers should book ahead of time.



About one-third of American travelers overall report they used online video specifically for trip planning purposes.

For destination inspiration, Millennial and GenZ age travelers are particularly open to content through video sources like TikTok and streaming services, according to Destination Analysts.



"Hush" trips may be the newest travel trend with **remote workers packing up and going somewhere new for a week or two, without ever telling their employer,** according to *Forbes*. Travelers login, get to work, and save some time to explore. Traditional hotel properties are marketing to remote workers by offering discounts on extended stays - along with the perks of having pools, bars and fitness centers on a workcation.



According to a survey by GetYourGuide, **90% of travelers want to experience a destination "like a local"** and two-thirds of Millennial respondents specifically worry about whether it's an authentic experience.



Surveyed travelers say they want to shop at small businesses and spend more during a vacation **if they know it supports the local community.**



"Set-jetting" is still on the rise - **70% of Gen Z and Millennial respondents have "been inspired to travel to a destination after seeing it featured in a TV show, news source, or movie"** like Yellowstone, according to a report by American Express Travel.



Travelers have a new appreciation for the physical and mental health benefits of nature as a "soul-restoring, endorphin-eliciting, stress-relieving outlet," according to *Afar*. Forest bathing, or meditative walks in nature, are being integrated into back-to-basic wellness treatments and experiences.

To track and measure campaigns. Visit Billings staff in partnership with agency colleagues monitor the following data:

Smith Travel Research (for demand, occupancy and ADR), TBID Assessments, Collections from State Lodging Facility Use Tax, Destinations International Economic Impact Calculators, VisaVue Spending Trends, AirDNA Data, Destination Analysts reporting, Zartico.



FY24 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

GROWING VISITATION

INCREASING VISITATION IS VISIT BILLINGS' HIGHEST PRIORITY, AND ALL THE STRATEGIES LISTED BELOW WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THAT VISITOR GROWTH FROM ALL SEGMENTS - LEISURE, SPORTS AND MEETINGS/CONVENTIONS.

VISIT BILLINGS' SUCCESS AND THE SUCCESS OF LOCAL LODGING PARTNERS, LEADS TO GROWTH IN THE VISITOR ECONOMY BY ELEVATING RESTAURANTS, RETAILERS, AND ATTRACTIONS - WHILE ALSO ENCOURAGING NEW OPPORTUNITIES.

In some parts of Montana, over-visitation overwhelms conversations about the tourism and travel industry. Billings is an amazing travel destination where businesses appreciate the visitor. Visit Billings strategies are welcoming and aim to help support visitors, meeting planners, tour operators, and sports tournament owners to ensure successful trips, events, and business priorities.

- 2023-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN
- INCREASE LEISURE VISITATION
- FOSTER SPORTS TOURISM
- THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE
- RECRUIT MEETINGS, CONFERENCES, AND REUNIONS
- THE INTERNATIONAL MARKETPLACE
- BILLINGS LOGAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT



INSPIRE

As Brand MT inspires travel to Montana, Visit Billings inspires travel to Billings.



ORIENT

Once inspired to travel to Billings, help travelers find whys and ways to build Billings into their itineraries and agendas for leisure, sports, business, meetings, or group tour events.



FACILITATE

Once in Billings, facilitating visitors to ensure a positive experience and foster a repeat visitor is priority.

THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The strategic plan will carry forward the momentum and successes of Visit Billings and local tourism today. Critical areas of focus and new areas to concentrate on will be identified, while also revealing strategies to ensure Visit Billings' efforts and investments are set to position the destination and its partners through 2027.

THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Exceptional service leads to repeat visitation and extended stays from guests to the city. Making sure travelers feel welcome and enjoy their stay at Montana's Trailhead is a top priority for Visit Billings leadership and staff. The Visit Billings team works in many ways to help create a positive experience for visitors including the Billings Trail Guides program, Meet the Locals, and Certified Tourism Ambassador Destination commitments with Mickey Schaeffer & Associates. Such priorities ensure quality customer service and positive visitor experiences. Additionally, Visit Billings is leading destination efforts to offer autism-friendly travel options for visitors to the city. ZooMontana, the Historic Billings Depot, the Boothill Inn & Suites, the Billings Chamber, and the United Way of Yellowstone County have already joined this effort with Visit Billings.

WELCOME TO THE
**TRAILHEAD
OF AWESOME**

Finally, a positive visitor experience is also directly impacted by how sports events and meetings are supported. Staff offer convention and tournament servicing options like hosted site inspections, registration assistance, city and regional tour planning, financial incentives, grant options, and confidential hotel sourcing to assist meeting planners and tournament owners who want to host events in Billings.

INCREASE LEISURE VISITATION

Leisure travel marketing strategies remain the highest priority for the organization as leisure visitation supports all Visit Billings' stakeholders (hotels, motels, campgrounds) as well as tourism partners including restaurants, retailers, attractions and event owners. Regional and national marketing campaigns will focus on encouraging unique itineraries that elevate the destination and the region to road trippers, outdoor enthusiasts, history buffs, arts and culture aficionados, and foodies - to name a few. Promotion of events and must-see attractions to regional audiences is key as is elevation of Great American Road Trip-type itineraries to potential visitors in national markets. Billings is a stop along the route from Badlands to Yellowstone and every park, byway, and monument in between.

Visit Billings staff expect higher travel demand during the warm season of 2023 as gateway communities reopen following June 2022's historic floods that impacted the north and northeast entrances to Yellowstone as well as sections of the Beartooth Scenic Byway south of Billings. The team will attend leisure travel shows in addition to executing several national and regional strategic marketing campaigns and publicity opportunities.





*Billings Citywide
Average Daily Rate:
\$120.98
**+10.5%
YOY**

*Billings Citywide
Occupancy: 66.8%
**+7.7%
YOY**

*SMITH TRAVEL RESEARCH 2022

FOSTER SPORTS TOURISM

Sports tourism happens when a person or group travels from one community to another to compete, support, and celebrate sports and athletes. This is one of the fastest growing sectors in tourism for Billings. Efforts to support local tournament owners, governing bodies, and growing existing events, while recruiting new sports events to cultivate this market, are key priorities for the destination and staff. Furthermore, ensuring Billings has appropriate and competitive venues is also a priority of the BTBID and the Billings CVB leadership and staff. Namely, supporting the City of Billings in its efforts to build a sports facility. Such a state-of-the-art venue for the community and destination is critical to the future of sports tourism growth. Strategies also will include marketing, lead generation, and attending appointment-based conferences to strengthen relationships with event owners to elevate Billings as a sports tourism destination.

RECRUIT MEETINGS, CONFERENCE, AND REUNIONS

Visit Billings staff strive to be innovative in meeting the needs of meeting planners and incentivizing decision-makers to choose Billings as their meeting destination. Staff work closely with meeting hotel sales staff to help inspire and orient meeting professionals with thoughtful sales strategies to book meetings and conferences in Billings in 2024, 2025 and 2026. This segment can continue to have a strong economic impact on the community. The team will attend conferences and tradeshows to elevate the Meet Me in Billings campaign effort.

THE INTERNATIONAL MARKETPLACE

International inbound travel was brought to a halt in March 2020. While it has since partially recovered, it is not expected to fully recover until 2025. With Billings being a part of the Great American Road Trip - Badlands to Yellowstone - Montana has seen a stronger increase in international travel and group tours since 2020 particularly with fly/drive visitors. It is important for Visit Billings staff to maintain relationships with international tour operators so overseas visitors who have ranked sightseeing, fine dining, and national parks/monuments as major draws in deciding where to spend time while visiting the United States, keep Billings top-of-mind. Visit Billings works with Brand MT and partners like Visit Southeast Montana and Rocky Mountain International to foster this market.

BILLINGS LOGAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (BIL)

Air service continues to be a direct route to foster success in the tourism equation for Billings. Billings Logan International Airport (BIL) has enhanced the traveler's experience with the \$55 million airport expansion and renovation in recent years. This investment has elevated BIL in many ways. At the same time, from a destination marketing and management point of view, any lack of consistent air capacity or high fares can negatively impact a traveler's decision to make Billings part of their business, leisure, or sports itinerary. The BIL experience is strong, but continuing to work on flight options, fares, and capacities is key to community organizations like Visit Billings.

For Billings to continue to compete as a tourism destination, air service including capacity and subsequent competitive fares must be addressed. Accessibility to a destination is a key factor that affects volume of visitor traffic to Billings. Direct flights have grown visitation to Billings' regional competitive set. Direct flights to and from a region offer momentum to a destination for tourism development. If people can't get to your destination, they won't. If it's easier to go to a different destination, they will take the route of least resistance. The I-90 and I-94 corridor is important for roadtrippers, regional conferences, medical tourism, and some business/sports travel, but the airline passenger is critical to visitor growth in Billings and to at least maintain the visitation we see today. Visitor growth increases new money and spend into the city which can be assisted by increased air service.





Big Sky

SHAPED BY THE YELLOWSTONE RIVER.
BORN IN THE SHADOWS OF THE RIMROCKS.
WELCOME TO MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD.
BE GUIDED BY THE GREATNESS THAT LIES
AHEAD. BIG SKIES AND BIG THINGS.
FORGE YOUR OWN PATH.

FY24 GOALS & TACTICS

ADVERTISING AND PROMOTIONS

GOAL:

DRIVE YEAR-ROUND VISITATION BY INCREASING AWARENESS FOR BILLINGS AS AN IDEAL TRAVEL DESTINATION, WITH BIG SKIES AND OUTDOOR ADVENTURE.

TACTICS:

- Execute Visit Billings' research driven, consumer-focused brand platform, "Forge Your Own Path," to build marketing campaigns and promotions that showcase rich visuals of the entire destination.

- Develop a storymaking strategy leveraging content like Trailguides to showcase the locals and their warm, genuine nature, while sharing with visitors a locals' perspective on life that is uniquely Montanan.
- Create niche marketing campaigns such as Summer Events as well as creative that focuses on amenities such as the Brew Trail to encourage visitors to discover all the cultural attractions, events and culinary delights found in the city of Billings with its unique urban downtown and hospitality offerings.
- Showcase Billings in fall and winter through a combined indoor/outdoor tactic through the Keepers of the Cool creative including #hibernate? #hibernopel tag.
- Continue promoting the Great American Road Trip and its itineraries to remind repeat visitors and inform first-time visitors that Billings, Montana is the most scenic route into Yellowstone with incredible proximity to iconic attractions.



- Launch new "Be an Outsider" marketing campaign to increase awareness of the big skies and unspoiled outdoor adventure found in a visit to Billings, as well as the natural attractions surrounding the city.

- Promote the current and any emerging flight markets through grant opportunities, paid media, as well as through digital and social platforms.

- Develop a placemaking strategy that begins creating more of an understanding and demand for Billings' individual districts and neighborhoods that include Downtown, the West End, the Heights, and Central.

- Through public relations, drive media coverage for the destination that profiles Trailsetters who can share the locals' perspective on how to best enjoy Billings as a destination for adventure-seekers, foodies and cultural enthusiasts.

TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL MEDIA

GOALS:

INCREASE BRAND AWARENESS

Increase awareness for the destination that encourages target audiences to deepen consumer engagement with the destination's brand.

INCREASE DIRECT FLIGHT AWARENESS

Increase awareness for the direct flights to Billings from Chicago, Dallas/Fort Worth, Denver, Las Vegas, Minneapolis, Phoenix, Salt Lake City, and Seattle.

TACTICS:

- Use a multi-channel media strategy approach that utilizes Native / Display, Meta, Pinterest, Search and TripAdvisor, while also increasing investment and expanding geo-targeting to support drive and flight markets.

- In drive markets, use channels best for events - search and display - to drive awareness and site traffic.

- Engage with local media publications for the promotion of Billings and supporting local businesses.

- Prioritize Meta and Display to promote awareness and drive website traffic as social and display performed well historically, which creates efficiencies in maximizing impressions and leading users to the website to learn more and take a specific action.

- Launch a Discovery Campaign that utilizes Google's audience and customer intent signals to deliver highly visual, inspiring personalized ad experiences to people who are ready to discover and engage with the Visit Billings' brand.

- In flight markets, leverage channels that have previously driven success for those markets - search, display, and social (Pinterest and Meta).

- Strategically place out-of-home billboards within and around Billings to engage local and regional audiences.

- Utilize advanced analytics to inform media performance and strategy, while also developing ROI tracking on key advertising/marketing initiatives, that strives to deliver increased impressions through the fiscal year and garners a significant increase in engagements with a click-thru rate that is well above industry average.

- Strategically place content in front of the target audience by seamlessly weaving it in throughout the Tripadvisor ecosystem using Boost, where the brand message will be natively integrated into the Tripadvisor experience.

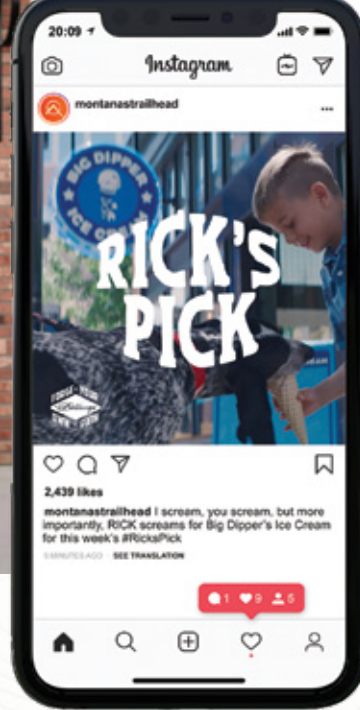
- Also for flight markets, increase investment in upper-funnel tactics to drive awareness in markets where Billings is a lesser-known travel destination.

- Sponsor content development and niche digital targeting the two-wheel audience.

- Optimize audiences and expand targeting tactics within existing channels and test new tactics on new channels.

- Harness the power of advanced analytics to inform media performance and strategy.





INTERACTIVE AND SOCIAL

GOALS:

INCREASE BRAND INTERACTION

Increase brand interaction with informative and engaging digital content that builds awareness and loyalty, while ultimately motivating consumer travel.

GROW SOCIAL

Grow the audience on Visit Billings' social platforms.

INFORM PLANNERS

Provide meeting planners and sports event planners with the information and materials they need to choose Billings as their preferred destination for meetings, conventions and sports events.

GROW EMAIL LIST

Increase contacts in Visit Billings email database and encourage an open rate of over 20% for email marketing initiatives.

INCREASE SITE VISITATION

Increase website visitation.

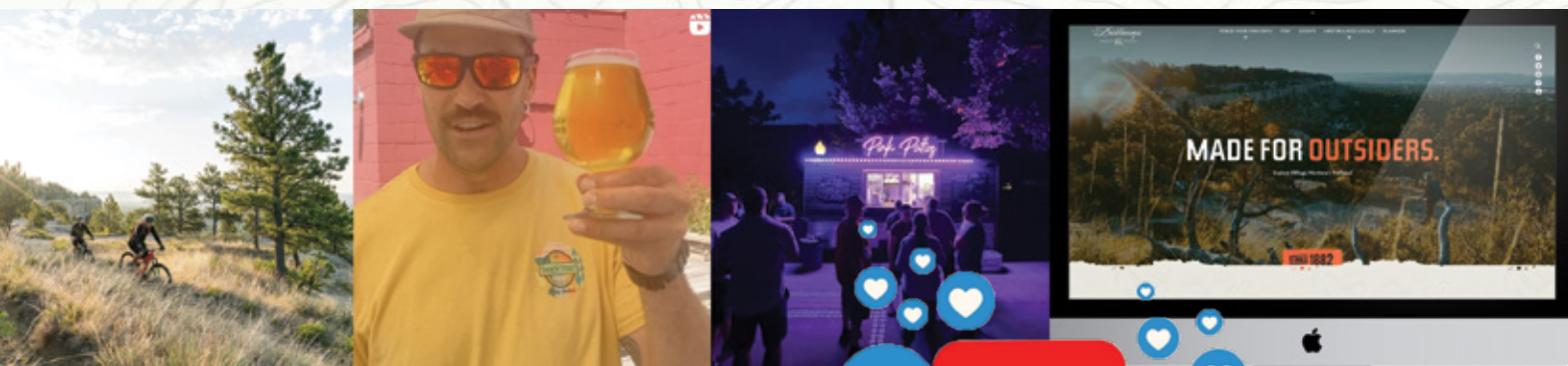
TACTICS:

SOCIAL MEDIA / EMAIL

- Share the destination's story in a compelling, consistent and editorial manner, with storytelling as the driving characteristic.
- Extend the Visit Billings' voice into the online space as a persona - the approachable and lighthearted Billings Trail Guide.
- Annually develop an integrated editorial content calendar to consistently plan and prepare content (e.g. copy, photos, videos, etc.), streamlining and integrating social content development efforts across all channels.
- Integrate seasonal messaging, key events, new local businesses, etc. across all digital channels.
- Increase video content on all owned channels - which also will be used in paid and earned channels - which engage a variety of local personalities.
- Through Facebook, encourage dialogue by asking followers' questions while also highlighting partners and special events.
- On Instagram, curate and utilize consumer-generated photography and video, while also posting editorial photos, videos and engaging "Stories" highlighting destination experiences and offerings. Promote the #VisitBillings and #MontanasTrailhead hashtags while encouraging visitors and stakeholders to do the same.
- Expose travelers to editorial content, blog articles and social content through email marketing.

WEBSITE

- Develop a new Plan Your Trip section on the site to better help visitors make traveling to Billings as easy as possible. Content to include: maps of the flight markets and insight on the I-90/I-94 corridor; highlight the different neighborhoods found in Billings; showcase itineraries and blogs; provide transportation information including Uber/Lyft/rentals; and continue promoting visitor guide/digital guide downloads and e-newsletter sign-ups.
- Promote new blog content on the website, featuring experiences that align with the interest-based personas from History Buffs to Foodies and Outdoor Enthusiasts - as well as Winston The Sloth's page.



PUBLIC RELATIONS

GOALS:

GENERATE EARNED MEDIA AND INFLUENCER COVERAGE

Generate earned media and influencer coverage for Billings, positioning the destination as an authentic, welcoming city giving visitors access to modern amenities, outdoor adventure, family fun and exquisite food/beverage options while preserving the Montana feel they are seeking.

INCREASE WEBSITE TRAFFIC

Increase traffic to the Visit Billings website through earned digital media placements including the destination URL.

PLACE EARNED MEDIA

Place earned media features in target publications with a total audience impressions value of at least 10 million.

TACTICS:



Identify new, cost-effective means to achieve similar ends of traditional travel/tourism media outreach.



Explore offering digital experiences to media and influencers to reach a broader audience.



Develop earned media tactics that tie directly to paid media efforts to amplify seasonal campaigns, and vice versa.



Leverage evolving industry trends such as multi-generational travel, solo travel and self-improvement trips as a framework for earned media content.

MONTANA

Attend PRSA event(s) or Brand MT sponsored opportunities.



Share brief news and story ideas with greater frequency about Billings events, award nominations and other news with target media and influencers.



Explore partnerships with Brand MT and Visit Southeast Montana to share earned media costs.



SPORTS MARKETING



GOALS:

GENERATE NEW ROOM NIGHTS

Generate new room nights from sports events recruited to the area that will impact room demand and increase revenue while creating even greater awareness for Billings as a choice sports destination.

PARTNER

Successfully partner with collegiate partners for NCAA and NAIA event bids.

GROW EVENTS

Grow or expand existing sports events with current event and tournament owners.

30 EVENTS

Book or support 30 sports events in Billings.

RETAIN EVENTS

Retain existing sports events.

TACTICS:

- Attend sporting event trade shows like SportsETA (May 2023 and May 2024) and TEAMS (fall 2023) to build relationships and create awareness for Billings sports and leisure offerings.
- Generate new leads for sports events by collaborating with IMM to build a Billings sports planning guide/booklet to use as follow-up or leave behind (digital or print) when booking planner appointments.
- Develop email templates and e-postcard for sports marketing that helps to build and sustain relationships with sports planners.
- Focus on Collegiate Sports (RMC/MSUB) and collaborate with Frontier Conference regarding NAIA bids that will be live mid-2023.
- Grow and retain sports events that Visit Billings is already assisting with by meeting with local, state, or regional contacts and asking them how you can help them grow a tournament by a day(s) or by changing venues (say high school gym to a MetraPark building), etc.
- Develop and build upon sports sales toolkit for efficiencies in follow-up.
- Create a marketing and advertising plan to promote sports marketing in Billings, and include directories in the plan.
- Build a new section of Visit Billings website that showcases Billings as a sporting events destination and provides planners with the tools and information they need to book events in Billings.
- Receive certification with STS through SportsETA.
- Continue subscription with Destinations International Economic Impact Calculator.
- Develop a sports planning booklet and business cards for appointments and follow-ups.
- Capture new photography to help continue to build sports image library for Visit Billings.
- Begin planning logistics for a 2024 sports planner Fam tour in Billings (invite top leads to Billings and host for two days and two nights showcasing Billings like a hosted site inspection).
- Become active in Midland Roundtable.
- Research the possibility of creating a sports advocacy committee to assist with any volunteer needs, etc. (to launch possibly in Spring 2024).
- Continue to work with key stakeholders on the development of more product development for sports facilities.

MEETING AND CONVENTION RECRUITMENT



GOALS:

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Generate meeting and convention bookings and room nights as a result of sales initiatives to raise awareness of Billings as a choice meeting destination, and by providing meeting planners with the knowledge and logistical support they need to make meeting in Billings a success.

25 MEETINGS OR CONFERENCES

Book, support, and/or retain 25 meetings or conferences in Billings. Service 20 meetings, conferences, or events in Billings.

ELEVATE BILLINGS

Generate new room nights from meetings or conferences that will impact room demand and increase revenue while creating a stronger "Meet Me in Billings" brand.

NEW TOUR OPERATORS

Support Billings' five meeting hotels in efforts to recruit new and retain existing meetings and conferences.

LONGER ITINERARIES

Support existing state association and corporate meetings in Billings.

TACTICS

- Attend meeting and convention appointment-based national and regional events to build new and foster existing relationships with meeting planners including 2023 Small Market Meetings.
- Generate new leads for meetings by collaborating with Integrated Media Marketing or IMM and fostering relationships with new leads.
- Continue to develop and fine-tune digital and printed sales materials for meeting recruitment toolkit.
- Maintain efforts on Cvent and other platforms to better accommodate meeting planners looking to book in small market meeting destinations.
- Use e-communications like e-postcards to build relationships with state, regional, and national meeting planners.
- Look at consideration of a potential meeting planner familiarization tour in the next 12 months.
- Consider sponsorship opportunities with associations or organizations to offer more of an impact for attendees.
- Provide planners services to better facilitate attendees including visitor guidebooks, brew trail maps, off-agenda options, etc.

GROUP TOUR MARKET



Yellowstone National Park was the seventh most visited national park in the United States in 2022 with Glacier National Park rounding out the top 10, according to the National Park Service. In Montana, Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument is the third most-visited site (Brand MT). Billings as a tourism destination is a trailhead along many routes to and from key attractions like Yellowstone, Bighorn Battlefield, and Glacier National Park – to name a few – and can offer many amenities to international and domestic tour operators and their clients.

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK WAS THE SEVENTH MOST VISITED NATIONAL PARK IN THE UNITED STATES IN 2022

GOALS:

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Build relationships with domestic and international tour operators to continue the recovery of the group tour market.

ELEVATE BILLINGS

Elevate Billings as a competitive stopover city for the motorcoach industry and continue to work with tour operators and bus tour companies to elevate Billings as a major western tour destination.

LONGER ITINERARIES

Work with international market representatives to be quick to assist international visitors with longer itineraries for those who may be on fly/drive trips in the west and request more time in the city to explore more products including the brew trail, food scene, and outdoor recreation.

NEW PRODUCT INSIGHTS

Offer insights to operators regarding new products in the destination and refreshing itineraries.

NEW TOUR OPERATORS

Foster relationships with existing and new tour operators to continue to grow the domestic and international tour markets. The incubation period for successful leads and marketing strategies is demanding and important to the Visit Billings team to grow this segment.

TACTICS:

- Attend an American Bus Association (ABA) event.
- Attend international events hosted in the U.S. including International Round-Up (IRU 2024), IPW 2024, and ACGI 2023.
- Work with Brand MT for 2024 opportunities to host familiarization tours or in the market when applicable.
- Elevate Billings in the Great American West (GAW) publications to garner exposure for Billings to the German, French, Italian, Belgium, Denmark, the UK, and Australia markets. Visit Billings works closely with Brand MT and international Travel and Trade staff at the State of Montana's Department of Commerce.
- Continue to advocate on a national level to shorten Visa interview wait times with the U.S. Travel Association.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

GOALS:

RAISE AWARENESS

Raise awareness of the value of tourism throughout the community, and support stakeholders and front-line staff by providing tourism education.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Support initiatives that foster diversity and inclusion

TACTICS:

- Continue encouraging stakeholders within key industry segments such as lodging, dining, shopping, attractions, and interactive educational venues to become Certified Autism Organizations, which is achieved by training and certifying their staff through the IBCCES like Visit Billings has done.
- Develop a full advocacy campaign that educates the Billings community and residents on the benefits and economic impact of tourism.
- Formally introduce the Certified Travel Ambassador (CTA) program to tourism partners, stakeholders, and the medical community in order to help drive visitor spending through in-depth knowledge of the tourism product.

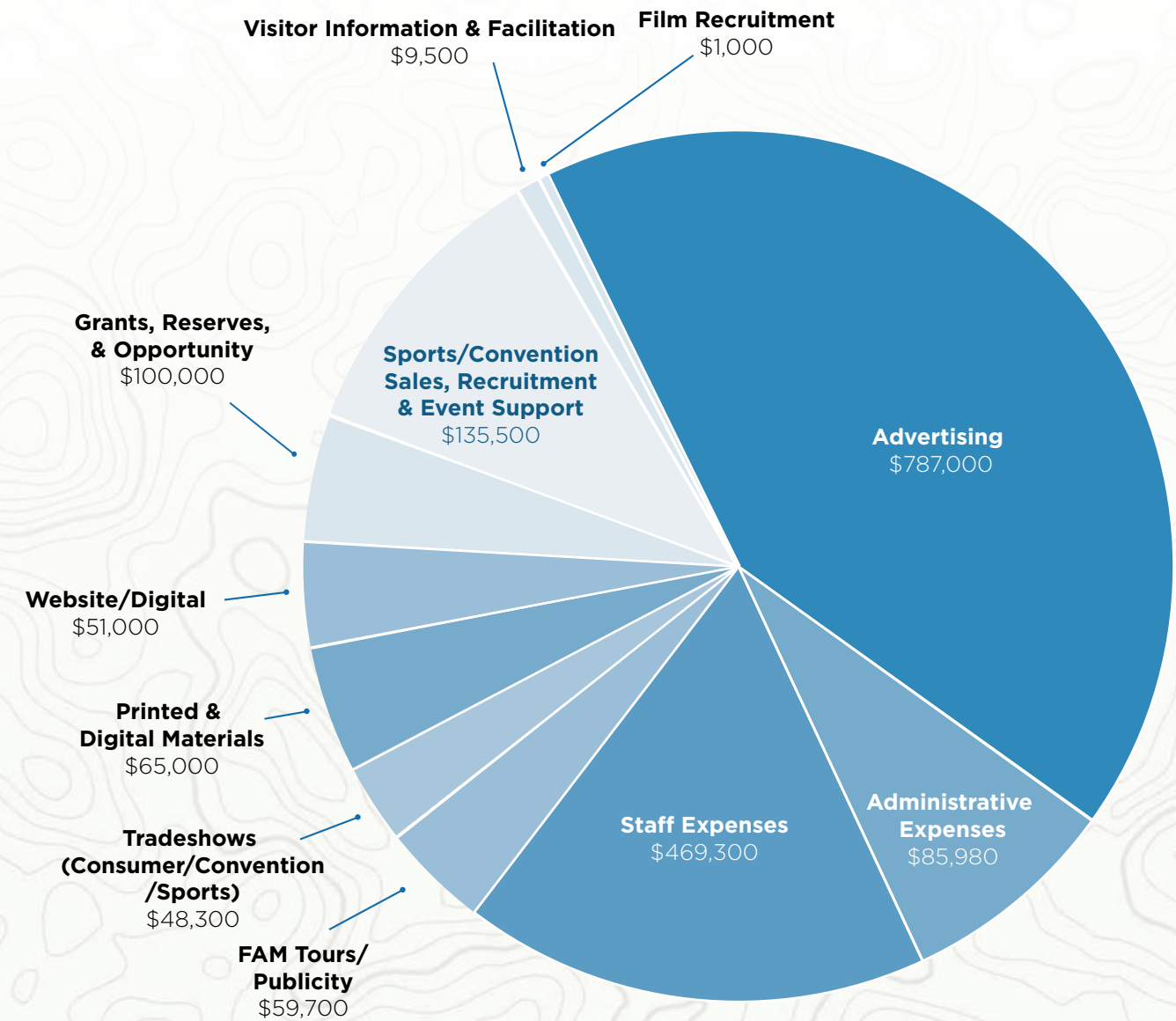


2024 BILLINGS TOURISM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BTBID) BUDGET

PROJECTED REVENUE	\$1,828,280
MARKETING & SALES TOTAL	\$1,273,000
Advertising	\$787,000
Grants, Reserves, & Opportunity	\$100,000
Printed & Digital Materials	\$65,000
Sports/Convention Sales, Recruitment & Event Support	\$135,500
Tradeshows (Consumer/Convention /Sports)	\$48,300
FAM Tours/Publicity	\$59,700
Website/Digital	\$51,000
Visitor Information & Facilitation	\$9,500
Film Recruitment	\$1,000
STAFF EXPENSES	\$469,300
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	\$85,980
BTBID TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,828,280



BILLINGS TOURISM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BTBID) DOLLARS – BUDGET FY24



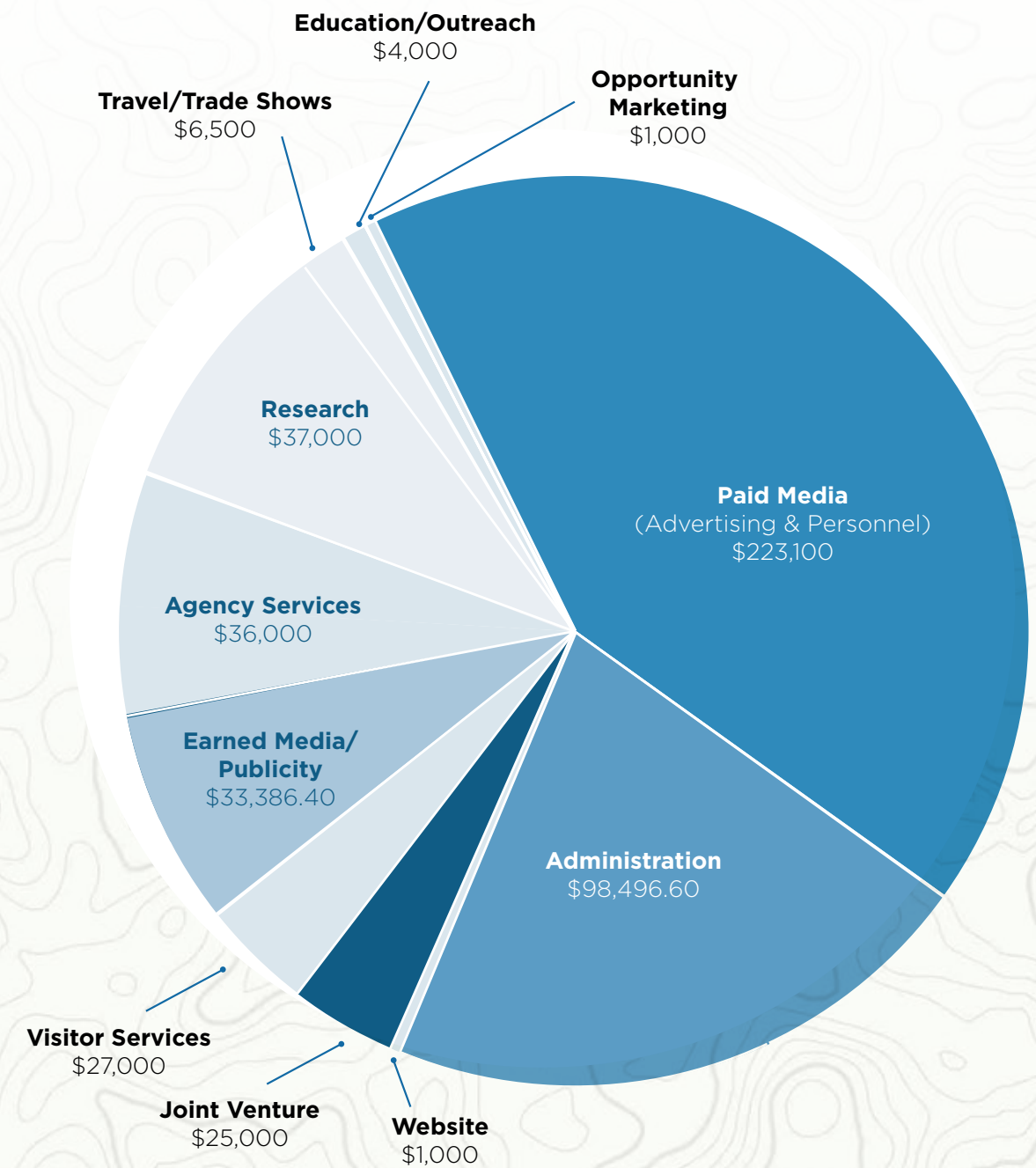
PROJECTED REVENUE: \$1,828,280

FY24 BILLINGS TOURISM CVB BUDGET

PROJECTED FY24 REVENUE	\$492,483
Paid Media (Advertising & Personnel)	\$223,100
Research	\$37,000
Travel/Trade Shows	\$6,500
Visitor Services	\$27,000
Website	\$1,000
Administration	\$98,496.60
Agency Services	\$36,000
Earned Media/Publicity	\$33,386.40
Education/Outreach	\$4,000
Joint Venture	\$25,000
Opportunity Marketing	\$1,000
CVB TOTAL EXPENSES	\$492,483



BILLINGS CVB DOLLARS – BUDGET FY24



Adventure



EPIC SINCE 1882



VISIT *Billings*[®]

MONTANA'S  TRAILHEAD

