

Short Bios – Montana & The Family Market Panel

DAN AUSTIN

President of Austin Adventures – Billings, MT

Born in California, Dan first ignited his passion for adventure travel in the 1970's as partner of a rafting company in the Pacific Northwest. His lust for travel soon took him to Alaska, where he saw opportunity as the owner of a construction company developing projects from remote Alaskan villages to military bases in Hawaii and The Azores. In 1994, seeking a new challenge, Dan and a partnership group bought Backcountry Tours of Bozeman, Montana. The purchase turned out to be the catalyst for things to come. In 2000, Dan partnered with retired industrialist and financier Paul Lehman and Austin-Lehman Adventures was born. In 2013, Dan chose to sell Austin Adventures to Xanterra Parks and Resorts, renaming the company Austin Adventures to bring the focus back on those who built the brand. Along the path to founding one of the world's most recognized active travel brands, Dan founded the non-profit Wheels of Change organization dedicated to empowering rural Africans through mobility via donated bicycles. The nonprofit was the recipient of Travel + Leisure Magazine's 2011 Global Vision Award.

CAROL AUSTIN

Austin Adventures Guest Service Administrator

Carol Austin was born and raised in Montana. She grew up exploring the Rocky Mountains and western Canada. Even after all of these years and vacation miles, Yellowstone is still her favorite place on earth! She didn't actually branch out into traveling the world until the kids were off to college. Through Austin Adventures she's had the chance to visit many wonderful places, but her bucket list is still very long, and of course it grows every year. Working along with her husband Dan, the summer of 2013 was her 15th season with Austin Adventures. When asked the favorite things about her job, it would have to be working with both guests and operators from around the world. From that "one can learn something new and enlightening every day."

KASEY AUSTIN

Austin Adventures Vice President of Operations

Kasey, guide in the summer and administrator the rest of the year, works with ground operators around the world as well as domestic guides on the home front when it comes to the details of planning a vacation. She grew up in the business learning about adventure travel from a kid's perspective. Now she puts what she's learned since she was six years old to use both in the office and out in the field. Kasey has guided trips across the western United States and gets out to travel abroad whenever she has the chance. For the past two years (2012 and 2013) Kasey has been honored as one of the Top Travel Professionals Under 35 by Travalliance Media (publishers of *Vacation Agent* and *Agent@Home* magazines). In April, she was singled out by the editors of *OUTSIDE Magazine* as the world's top Family Guide for 2014.



DAVE WIGGINS

Partner and Founder of Widness & Wiggins PR

Dave's whole adult life has centered in and around adventure travel ever since he picked up the stakes and moved from Pennsylvania to Colorado in the early '70's. Since that fateful migration, it's been his passion to market, sell, promote and engage in active, meaningful travel experiences worldwide. From pioneering the concept back in the industry's beginning years, to launching his company (AWE!), then taking it online with GORP and Away.com, advising and then working for a leading tour operator, Austin-Lehman Adventures, launching the industry alliance, Trusted Adventures to now partnering in the PR firm of Widness & Wiggins it's been a life mission to inspire travelers to seek out authenticity, sustainability and discovery in their travels. Along the journey Dave fell in love with the American West and became a lifelong member of the Dude Rancher's Association.