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Application

Instructions

Print to PDF will convert the application plus any PDF attachments into a single PDF file. **Release for Review** will change the status of the application to Under Review and move it on to the evaluation process. **Negotiation** will allow you to unlock one or more sections of the application and route the application back to the applicant for further editing. **Annotations** allow internal staff to add notes that are visible to internal staff only and possibly also reviewers if they have a special security privilege. The applicant cannot see these notes. **Versions** will display all component versions that were created as a result of the negotiation process. **Feedback** allows staff to enter feedback about the application to the applicant. The feedback text will appear at the bottom of the application and will be visible to anyone who has access to the application. **Withdraw** changes the status of the application to Withdrawn and removes the app from the evaluation process.

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15254 - FY15 Region/CVB Marketing Plan - Final

16748 - FY15 Billings Convention & Visitors Bureau Marketing Plan
DOC Office of Tourism

Status: Under Review

Original Submitted Date: 05/08/2014 2:11 PM

Last Submitted Date: 05/15/2014 10:27 AM

Applicant Information

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Organization Information

Name: Billings Chamber of Commerce/Convention and Visitors Bureau

Organization Type: Non-Profit Organization

Organization Website: www.VisitBillings www.BillingsChamber.com

Address: 815 South 27th Street

Phone: 406-245-4111
City State/Province Postal Code/Zip

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Alternate Phone	406-869-3726
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Community & Brand Support

1. Describe your destination.

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

A Billings Brand Promise

Billings is Montana's City

Shaped by the Yellowstone River and sheltered by the Rims, Billings is the cradle of progressive regional commerce providing healthcare, transportation, diverse educational opportunities, cuisine, arts and culture. Billings is a place of forever views and forever memories with the adventure of the untamed wilderness and history right out your front door.

Billings connects you to warm, genuine, hardworking people who possess a perspective on life that is uniquely Montanan and inherently individual. People who look you in the eye and take time to welcome you home.

Montana's city connects you to the authentic historical west. Residents and guests can immerse themselves in modern conveniences on the edge of the genuine frontier.

Billings is Montana's Trailhead.

About Billings

Billings, situated in Yellowstone County, is Montana's largest city. The city is a business, transportation and sales hub between Denver and Calgary, Seattle and Minneapolis and a major city serving the Bakken formation in NE Montana/NW North Dakota. The major industries driving the local economy are agriculture, tourism, energy development, transportation, medical, and education. Shopping, dining, nightlife, outdoor offerings, family attractions, and historic and cultural activities are major draws to the area, along with the city's approximate 4,500 hotel rooms and hundreds of thousands of flexible meeting space.

Logan Airport serves eight (8) cities directly with major airlines including Delta, United, Alaska Air and Allegiant. Direct flights from Salt Lake City, Denver, Seattle, Minneapolis, to name a few, are offered several times daily year-round with seasonal Chicago and Atlanta flights.

- Billings Population: 106,000
- Yellowstone County: 150,000
- Average July Temperature: 72.5
- Average January Temperature: 27.1

What They Say

- 6th Greatest Place in the Nation to Live - Kiplinger 2013
- 26th Best Performing Small City (job and wage growth) - Milliken Institute 2013
- A Top Place to Retire 2013 – FORBES
- Sixth American City with Lowest Taxes 2013 – Office of Revenue Analysis, U.S. Government
- #1 motorcycle ride in America – The Beartooth Highway - American Motorcycle Assoc. 2011
- Billings is ranked as one of America's best get away Cities - Daily News Entertainment, 2011
- Billings is ranked #2 out of 10 cities with the strongest economies – Parenting Magazine, 2010
- Billings is ranked in the top 20 greatest places to live in the west – American Cowboy, 2010
- Billings is ranked the 37th most bicycle friendly community in the US – Bicycling Magazine, 2010
- Billings was named in the top 38 cities for unpolluted air – State of Air Report, 2010
- Billings is named in the top 83 must see cities in the west – Old West Destinations, 2010
- Billings is really AWESOME! Robert (age 9) – Billings VIC log book, 2010

About Visit Billings

Visit Billings is funded by Montana's State Lodging Tax as a Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) as well as by local Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) funds. The Billings CVB and TBID are managed by the Billings Chamber of Commerce.

The Visit Billings team has the best job in town. Staff members promote all things Billings and everything the region offers visitors from every travel segment. The motivated team is charged with marketing Billings on state, regional, national and international levels as a choice sports, business, convention/meeting, and leisure destination.

Upcoming Highlights for FY15

- July – Catholic Daughters of the Americas International Convention
- July – Northern Classic Regional Soccer Tournament (U13-U19)
- September – Montana County Treasurer's Convention

- November - Host city for the NCAA Cross Country Regional Championships
- March – GNAC Men's and Women's National Basketball Championships
- FYearlong – Preps for the 2015 (July) BMW MOA International Rally

Executive Summary for the Visit Billings FY15 Marketing Plan and Budget

This 2014-2015 Marketing Plan serves as an inspirational guide for Visit Billings as a destination marketing organization. This document offers the reader comprehensive insight for Billings as a destination and an overview of the fiscal year's strategies, activities, goals and plans to grow tourism at Montana's Trailhead.

It is important to note that this plan is a broad-brush, high-level strategic view from which we will develop actions. It is meant to be a living, and at times fluid, document that will allow the Visit Billings team to continually refine actions based upon opportunities, existing resources, ongoing research, measurable program results, Board direction, and the ever-changing demands of Billings' dynamic marketplace.

Tourism is a crucial part of the Billings economy. This plan provides strategic direction to help guide success for Visit Billings stakeholders and the local hospitality community with goals to drive the economic and social importance of the tourism industry.

The Visit Billings team operates on a fiscal year calendar from July one through June thirty. In order to fulfill the mission and objectives of this document, Visit Billings Board members and staff will work with the Montana Office of Tourism, tourism entities, the City of Billings, Yellowstone County, Downtown Billings, Big Sky Economic Development, area attractions, private sector businesses and the media as well as regional partners including, but not limited to, Southeast Montana and neighboring communities like Red Lodge. This plan positions the organization into a leadership role for tourism growth. This includes meetings and conventions recruitment, leisure travel segment, sporting events, and film for the purpose of economic and cultural growth for Billings and the surrounding region.

The main goal of this plan is to pursue the Visit Billings mission. Staff will execute and follow this marketing plan and budget outline in order to generate room nights for lodging facilities in the city of Billings by effectively marketing the city as a preferred travel destination. Through visitor and convention recruitment, Billings' industries and businesses will continue to grow and prosper resulting in a positive economic impact for stakeholders, the city of Billings, county of Yellowstone and state of Montana.

About Billings Tourism

- Visitor Expenditures: \$250 Million/Annually
- Two million Visitors Annually
 - (1 million overnight guests & 1 million day visitors)
 - Impact of Average Visitor on Local Economy? \$225/Room Night

Source: *Randall Travel Marketing - 2010*

Optional: [Include attachments here](#)

[Abridged Visit Billings FY 15 Budget Narrative.pdf](#)

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

The Travel Decision, Visit Billings & the Montana Office of Tourism

The Montana Office of Tourism (MTOT), Montana tourism regions and fellow Montana Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVB) and state Tourism Business Improvement Districts play extremely important roles in Billings' tourism success. We are all in this together, if you will.

Leveraging dollars, especially with co-op and joint-venture opportunities, is vital. Since the lodging tax was implemented more than 25 years ago, annual visitation to Big Sky Country has climbed to more than 11 million people with estimated visitor spending at \$3.5 billion.

The Visit Billings marketing plan supports the Montana Tourism and Recreation Strategic Plan into 2017 through the implementation of the marketing strategies outlined in the full narrative document. Outlined in this full plan is the Travel Decision Process model. It illustrates the thought process of how the typical traveler makes travel decisions. It's a three-phase process: Inspiration, Orientation, and Facilitation.

The Visit Billings team implements this process marketing plan-wide to grow tourism at Montana's Trailhead. Specifically with MTOT, the Inspiration phase is the one in which the traveler is made aware of the general product and develops a desire to visit the destination. MTOT inspires potential visitors. This phase is masterfully executed by the Montana Office of Tourism, which uses Montana's key tourism pillars to invite millions of visitors to the state each year.

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.

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 in to manageable daily distances. Visit Billings can maximize efforts of the Montana Office of Tourism and Visit Southeast Montana by focusing largely on the Orientation and Facilitation stages.

In Billings we keep this front of mind daily by directing prospect travelers to www.VisitBillings.com, mailing visitor guide requests promptly, and/or fielding telephone inquiries in the local office to carry out the orientation phase. Staff then transitions to facilitation by making sure local frontline employees and volunteers are motivated and knowledgeable in the Billings Visitor Information Center and at area hotels and attractions via the Trailhead Tourism Ambassador program, and by properly communicating to tourism partners. Visit Billings staff also continue to inspire and facilitate a visitor's itinerary with apps, maps, billboards and brochures. The team works to continue to facilitate to make for a positive and perhaps longer stay in Billings, Southeast Montana and/or other destinations in and along their way.

Optional: [Include attachments here](#).

3. Who is your market?

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

Billings enjoys a special designation as the "big city" for Montana's "Big Sky Country" and the surrounding multi-state region. It is the hub where regional residents come for dining, shopping, events, meetings, and more. • Business travelers account for the largest portion of reported market segmentation at 29% of lodging occupancy. Individual business travelers represent 20%; blue collar workers represent 9%. The conference/meeting market segment accounts for approximately 24% of lodging occupancy. Group travel accounts for an additional 11%.

Billings is centrally located in the northwestern United States and is one of the state's top destinations for meetings. Billings offers six (6) convention hotels. Three of the six are large, full-service lodging properties (200+ rooms each), with conference and meeting space. The convention/meeting travel segment accounts for nearly one-quarter (21%) of the lodging inventory with 842 rooms. Leisure travel is strong and accounts for 29% of market segmentation. It consists of: tourists visiting the Billings area (16%); visiting friends and relatives (7%); and transient – passing through as part of a longer trip (6%).

The winter months of December and January are slowest; summer months of August, June, and July are consistently the strongest. Friday is the highest average weekday occupancy at 70.3%, while Sunday is the lowest at 47.1%.

(Source: RTM Lodging Survey)

Market Mix

29.2% Business

19.9% Individual business travelers (white collar)

9.3% Blue collar workers (mineral industry, commercial, construction laborers)

23.6% Conference/Meeting

6.9% Government

6.5% Corporate

3.9% SMERF

3.4% Association

1.5% Medical

1.4% Motor enthusiasts (Harley-Davidson, RV, motorcycles, cars)

23.1% Leisure

16.2% Tourists visiting or passing through as a part of a longer trip

6.9% Visiting local friends & relatives

12.9% Transient/Medical/Other

6.3% Transient: passing through as part of a longer trip

4.0% Medical: visiting Billings for medical reasons – personal or friends/family

2.6% Other: (specify)

11.2% Group

5.7% Team sports/events (team tournaments, rodeo, BMX, etc.)

3.4% Group tour/motor coach

2.1% Weddings/reunions/family events/social events

b. What are your emerging markets?

Visit Billings focuses on meeting and convention recruitment, leisure marketing, and positioning Billings as a sporting events hub as the team promotes the destination and grows visitation. As far as emerging markets are concerned, the Visit Billings team will focus on small meeting/convention recruitment, city-wide conventions like the BMW MOA 2015 International Rally where city-side venues as well we limited and full service properties can be utilized. Meantime, in the leisure segment, markets catering to the outdoor enthusiast as far as hunting, fishing and birding will be better researched and promoted in FY15. Billings has a strong outdoor recreation shopping mecca brand image. With the opening of the 200,000 square foot Scheel's in September of 2014, along with other successful and well-respected outdoor retailers, being an outdoor retail hub is a visitor draw.

As Billings continues to conduct its sports facilities assessment, other sporting event prospects may rise to the surface for the bidding process. The team's sports consultant, Dr. Chris Frye, will play a large role in lead cultivation and fostering.

Also, continued strategic planning for the international market as we continue to work with MTOT and RMI will be a priority.

The Visit Billings team will continue to analyze and keep in mind RTM Research included below to assist in marketing efforts:

"What makes Billings distinct/different from other destinations?" The significant majority of responses from RTM fell into the following categories (these are presented in rank order):

- • Big City/Size/Selection
- • Rimrocks
- • Shopping/dining
- • Friendly people
- • Scenery
- • Small town feel
- • Center of Montana/hub
- • Mountains
- • Variety of activities
- • Western flair
- • Oil & Industry
- • Old feel
- • Proximity to Yellowstone

c. What research supports your target marketing?

In 2009, the Billings Tourism Business Improvement District conducted a research project with Randall Travel Marketing (RTM). This research, released in early 2010, along with Smith Travel Research Reports, meeting planner and convention attendee follow up, to name a few, are the current basis of the Visit Billings (Billings CVB and Billings TBID) direction. As far as emerging markets are concerned, many of the markets the team is currently and will be promoting have been highlighted with assistance from the team's agency of record, AD Creative Group as well as via ITRR reports and MTOT presentations at TAC and Regions/CVBs meetings and the Governor's Conference on Tourism.

Optional: Include attachment here. [Billings Research - Updated Nov. 2012.ppt](#)

4. Overall Goals

Please see Measurable Objectives attachment for an explanation of what measurable objectives are monitored for Visit Billings.

As of May 1, 2014, the Visit Billings team and Board(s) had not specified details for FY15 goals as they are just reviewing third quarter FY14 realizations. FY15 goals/measurable objectives will be presented to the full TAC in Red Lodge in June.

Optional: Include attachments here. [State Marketing Plan - Measurable Objectives Explanations.docx](#)

5. Cooperative Opportunities

a. In what types of co-ops with MTOT would you like to participate?

The Visit Billings team is always eager to view the latest co-op opportunities from the Montana Office of Tourism (MTOT). The organization has been fortunate to have had the chance to take part in many of the placements offered including teaming up with MTOT and Visit Southeast Montana for internal bus advertising in the Chicago market in high seasons of FY13 and FY14.

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

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

Optional: Include attachments here.

Include pie chart here. [Pie Graph - FY15 State Lodging Tax.pdf](#)

Marketing Segment, Strategy & Budget

Marketing Segment	Marketing Method	Does research support this method?	Describe your method.	Supporting research/statistics	Provide a brief rationale.	Plan to measure success?	Marketing Method Evaluation	Estimated budget for each method.	Non bed tax funds?	Add'l Atchmnts
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Consumer	Photo/Video Library	Yes	<p>Visit Billings will continue to build and refresh its photo library which is used for advertising in all segments/markets in print and digital formats. Photos are also used on www.VisitBillings.com and social media platforms. The photos will be made available to tourism organizations and tourism partners at no charge.</p>	<p>Having an up to date and first class photo library allows the Visit Billings team to properly promote Billings and the region in which it sits. Photos play a critical role in the inspiration process of marketing to potential visitors.</p>	<p>Photos are inspiration. The photos will be utilized at www.visitbillings.com, in leisure travel campaigns, sports campaigns and meeting and convention recruitment efforts. An updated photo library is critical for destination promotion.</p>	<p>Smith Travel Research reports, vanity URLs, landing pages, social media contests, to name a few, are means to assist in reviewing the ROI on all projects.</p>	\$5,000.00	Yes	
Consumer	Print Advertising	Yes	<p><u>Leisure Recruitment</u></p> <p>As leisure promotion efforts grow at Montana's Trailhead, the Destination's target markets and diversity of mediums available for promotion continue to evolve as well. The Visit Billings team and its agency of record, AD Creative Group, will continue to produce comprehensive advertising campaigns (print and digital/online). State Lodging Tax funds will be allocated for print and digital advertising campaigns and joint-venture/co-ops with MTOT, while private funds will be invested in such opportunities as well as other marketing prospects like e-communications, printed materials such as the Billings Visitor Guide, billboards, SEM/SEO, www.VisitBillings.com, and social media efforts.</p> <p>Visit Billings campaigns are fluid and constants works in progress. There is \$60,000 budgeted for Leisure Advertising in the State Lodging Tax budget for Visit Billings. It can't be determined at this time how those dollars will be used between print and digital mediums, therefore, it's being split down the middle for simplification for this program.</p> <p>Meantime, creative costs budgeted at \$38,000 will be divided as well for print, digital, leisure and group marketing needs.</p>	<p><u>Please note:</u> There is a full report on research for Billings attached in a separate segment of this document.</p> <p>Leisure marketing targets women ages 25-54 as the typical family decision maker. Regional campaigns are geographically placed throughout Montana, northern Wyoming, western North and South Dakota and southern Canada. National campaigns target Montana, Wyoming, North and South Dakota, Washington, Oregon, California, Utah, Idaho, Minnesota and Illinois. Some of the national placements include the Billings team's co-op efforts with the Montana Office of Tourism (MTOT).</p>	<p><u>Regional Drive Market:</u> We will target communities that are at least 150 miles from Billings and are between Billings and the next larger regional markets such as Rapid City, Bismarck, Sheridan, Denver, Calgary and Fargo. Our target geographic area for the regional market will be includes Wyoming, Washington, Idaho, North Dakota, South Dakota and Canada. These visitors view Billings as a metropolitan area and are interested in shopping, special events, culture, history, nature and entertainment opportunities they cannot find in their hometowns.</p> <p><u>National Market:</u> We've known that Billings' geographic location between Glacier, Yellowstone and GrandTeton National Parks and the Black Hills has always made Billings an ideal stopping point for travelers, but this year again, the Gateway to Yellowstone positioning will be the focus of marketing efforts. Billings will be touted as the trailhead to traveler's national park journey. Billings is an obvious overnight stop for the motor coach industry touring the area National Parks and regional attractions.</p> <p>Campaigns for both regional and national targets will have year-round elements.</p>	<p>Unique website visits, landing pages for specific campaigns, social media interaction, and room demand via the Smith Travel Research (STR) Report, will assist the team in measuring and evaluating success in print and online/digital marketing efforts.</p>	\$39,500.00	Yes	

Consumer	Online/Digital Advertising	Yes	<p><u>Leisure Recruitment</u></p> <p>As leisure promotion efforts grow at Montana's Trailhead, the Destination's target markets and diversity of mediums available for promotion continue to evolve as well. The Visit Billings team and its agency of record, AD Creative Group, will continue to produce comprehensive advertising campaigns (print and digital/online). State Lodging Tax funds will be allocated for print and digital advertising campaigns and joint-venture/co-ops with MTOT, while private funds will be invested in such opportunities as well as other marketing prospects like e-communications, printed materials such as the Billings Visitor Guide, billboards, SEM/SEO, www.VisitBillings.com, and social media efforts.</p> <p>Visit Billings campaigns are fluid and constants works in progress. There is \$60,000 budgeted for Lesiure Advertising in the State Loding Tax budget for Visit Billings. It can't be determined at this time how those dollars will be used between print and digital mediums, therefore, it's being split down the middle for simplification for this program. Meantime, creative costs budgeted at \$38,000 will be divided as well for print, digital, leisure and group marketing needs.</p> <p>\$18,000 will be invested once again into TripAdvisor which has been a strong investment for Visit Billings.</p>	<p><u>Please note:</u> There is a full report on research for Billings attached in a separate segment of this document.</p> <p>Leisure marketing targets women ages 25-54 as the typical family decision maker. Regional campaigns are geographically placed throughout Montana, northern Wyoming, western North and South Dakota and southern Canada. National campaigns target Montana, Wyoming, North and South Dakota, Washington, Oregon, California, Utah, Idaho, Minnesota and Illinois. Some of the national placements include the Billings team's co-op efforts with the Montana Office of Tourism (MTOT).</p>	<p><u>Regional Drive Market:</u> We will target communities that are at least 150 miles from Billings and are between Billings and the next larger regional markets such as Rapid City, Bismarck, Sheridan, Denver, Calgary and Fargo. Our target geographic area for the regional market will be includes Wyoming, Washington, Idaho, North Dakota, South Dakota and Canada. These visitors view Billings as a metropolitan area and are interested in shopping, special events, culture, history, nature and entertainment opportunities they cannot find in their hometowns.</p> <p><u>National Market:</u> We've known that Billings' geographic location between Glacier, Yellowstone and GrandTeton National Parks and the Black Hills has always made Billings an ideal stopping point for travelers, but this year agan, the Gateway to Yellowstone positioning will be the focus of marketing efforts. Billings will be touted as the trailhead to traveler's national park journey. Billings is an obvious overnight stop for the motor coach industry touring the area National Parks and regional attractions.</p> <p>Campaigns for both regional and national targets will have year-round elements.</p>	<p>Unique website visits, landing pages for specific campaigns, social media interaction, and room demand via the Smith Travel Research (STR) Report, will assist the team in measuring and evaluating success in print and online/digital marketing efforts.</p>	\$57,500.00	Yes	
			<p>The Montana Film Office (MFO) promotes Montana, its cities and surrounding areas as top filmmaking</p>	<p>The Montana Film Office (MFO) promotes Montana,</p>	<p>The Montana Film Office (MFO) promotes</p>				

Film	Opportunity Marketing	Yes	<p>location options. As a destination with many historic and western amenities, the Visit Billings team will assist with any film, television and/or still photography projects that come to us via the MFO. Likewise, when the Visit Billings office receives an industry inquiry or request, staff will immediately loop in the MFO to foster the important partnership and lead to the most successful project(s) possible.</p> <p>The \$1,000 will be invested depending on what project opportunities arise. Private funds would be available also.</p>	<p>its cities and surrounding areas as top filmmaking location options. As a destination with many historic and western amenities, the Visit Billings team will assist with any film, television and/or still photography projects that come to us via the MFO. Likewise, when the Visit Billings office receives an industry inquiry or request, staff will immediately loop in the MFO to foster the important partnership and lead to the most successful project(s) possible.</p>	<p>Montana, its cities and surrounding areas as top filmmaking location options. As a destination with many historic and western amenities, the Visit Billings team will assist with any film, television and/or still photography projects that come to us via the MFO. Likewise, when the Visit Billings office receives an industry inquiry or request, staff will immediately loop in the MFO to foster the important partnership and lead to the most successful project(s) possible.</p>	<p>This will vary based on projects available, projects that come to fruition and the success of projects that indeed are successful.</p>	\$1,000.00	Yes	
Group Marketing	Print Advertising	Yes	<p>The Visit Billings team will continue to place creative marketing campaigns for meeting and convention recruitment efforts. These efforts will include digital and online placements and also print.</p> <p>For meeting and convention marketing, State Lodging Tax funds will be allocated for print and digital advertising campaigns. Private funds are also budgeted to assist with success in this segment.</p> <p>Visit Billings campaigns are fluid and constants works in progress. There is \$37,500 budgeted for M/C/Sports marketing in the State Lodging Tax budget for Visit Billings. It can't be determined at this time how those dollars will be used between print and digital mediums, therefore, it's being split down the middle for simplification for this program. Meantime, creative costs budgeted at \$38,000 will be divided as well for print, digital, leisure and group marketing needs.</p>	<p>Please note: There is a full report on research for Billings attached in a separate segment of this document.</p> <p>The philosophy for FY15 will be to be sure the Visit Billings sales team is working to master the state and the region in the meetings market. Geographically and accommodation-wise, which meetings should be hosted in Billings? Billings needs to stay true to itself always, particularly with this segment. The team will zero in on those smaller and mid-market conventions and meetings prospects. Staff will still attend some larger M/C tradeshows like the Collinson media show CONNECT, but will, for the most part, focus on having strong relationships with planners the destination can best serve.</p>	<p>The team will continue to place creative marketing campaigns for brand lift in similar publications that cater to meeting planners. Sales collateral, both print and digital, will be refreshed with Visit Billings branding to best showcase stakeholders, tourism partners and the destination strengths. And, the meetings and conventions page at www.VisitBillings.com will be revitalized to better accommodate meeting planners, prospects and attendees.</p>	<p>Smith Travel Research reports, vanity URLs, landing pages as well as meetings and conventions booked, are means to assist in reviewing the ROI on all projects.</p>	\$28,250.00	Yes	
			<p>The Visit Billings team will continue to place creative marketing</p>	<p>In Billings, the conventions and meetings travel</p>					

Group Marketing	Online/Digital Advertising	Yes	<p>campaigns for meeting and convention recruitment efforts. These efforts will include digital and online placements and also print.</p> <p>For meeting and convention marketing, State Lodging Tax funds will be allocated for print and digital advertising campaigns. Private funds are also budgeted to assist with success in this segment.</p> <p>Visit Billings campaigns are fluid and constants works in progress. There is \$37,500 budgeted for M/C/Sports marketing in the State Lodging Tax budget for Visit Billings. It can't be determined at this time how those dollars will be used between print and digital mediums, therefore, it's being split down the middle for simplification for this program. Meantime, creative costs budgeted at \$38,000 will be divided as well for print, digital, leisure and group marketing needs.</p>	<p>segment accounts for 25% of the area's visitation. Meeting planners seek strong air service and interstate accessibility, flexible meeting space with new technologies, affordable sleeping rooms, dining and retail options, and amenities and attractions that cater to their attendees.</p> <p>Target demographics in the meetings and convention recruitment efforts revolve around reaching decision makers. The Billings' sales team will work to reach experienced professionals and meeting planners. Efforts will spotlight on, but will not be limited to, the following segments/industries: Energy, agriculture, religious, corporate, military, trails, cycling, general outdoor and recreation, healthcare, not for profit, and professional and trade associations.</p> <p>Please note: There is a full report on research for Billings attached in a separate segment of this document.</p>	<p>The team will continue to place creative marketing campaigns for brand lift in similar publications that cater to meeting planners. Sales collateral, both print and digital, will be refreshed with Visit Billings branding to best showcase stakeholders, tourism partners and the destination strengths. And, the meetings and conventions page at www.VisitBillings.com will be revitalized to better accommodate meeting planners, prospects and attendees.</p>	<p>Smith Travel Research reports, vanity URLs, landing pages as well as meetings and conventions booked, are means to assist in reviewing the ROI on all projects.</p>	\$28,250.00	Yes	
Marketing Support	Research	No	<p>The Visit Billings team uses the Smith Travel Research or STR report monthly in reporting to lodging partners, when quoted in the media and to accurately report on as a team and organization. When someone wants to know how we know when a certain ad campaign was successful, the compression from a major event, etc. – we refer to the STR report. This is money well spent and will continue to subscribe to the report. STR offers benchmark data for internal use and comparison for YOY.</p> <p>The Visit Billings team subscribes to the EmpowerMINT database. It's a portal for meeting planners to search and compare destinations and</p>	<p>Both STR Report and EmpowerMINT subscriptions support aspects of the Visit Billings FY15 Marketing Plan. Both tools allow the Visit Billings team to focus on meeting and convention, leisure and sports event recruitment gathering information necessary to book business and grow tourism at Montana's Trailhead.</p>	<p><i>Smith Travel Research (STR Report):</i> Smith Travel Research produces a monthly report (STR) that offers stakeholders insight on industry benchmarking while providing key data on monthly and annual occupancy, demand, revenue per available room (RevPar) and supply for Billings. This report benchmarks Billings with other competing destinations across the country.</p> <p><i>EmpowerMINT Annual Subscription:</i> Visit Billings will continue its subscription to EmpowerMINT. EmpowerMINT is a portal for meeting planners to search and compare multiple</p>	<p>Measurable objectives, not yet outlined and determined for FY15, will be the means to measure success. The team will look at room nights and events booked as well as the success of leisure campaigns, etc.</p>	\$10,000.00	Yes	

			propsect properties for meeting and convention needs. A planner in the initial planning stages of a meeting can be educated on Billings as a destination option and is then connected directly with the CVB.		destinations – therefore keeping the Destination competitive with other cities.					
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	No	Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) & Regions/CVB's Meetings - \$2,000 Governor's Conference - \$1,500					\$3,500.00	Yes	
Marketing Support	DMAI	No	Destination Marketing Association International is a critical event for DMO staff in Billings to attend. The event has a history of being a very worthy investment for many reasons including networking opportunities, education, new trends and the sharing of best practices among peers in the industry. These dollars would assist in offsetting airfare, accommodations, and registration.	N/A	Professional training opportunities like DMAI's annual convention (July), offer education and professional training that are proven to be worthwhile for DMO staff per networking opportunities, new trends shared and the offerings of best practices among peers in the industry.	Visit Billings staff attending will report back verbally and in writing as to new trends, ideas, educational captures, etc. It is very important that the staff member attending report back post convention.		\$3,000.00	Yes	
Marketing Support	Marketing Plan Development	No	This completed project will allow Visit Billings to develop a strong, focused road map for the organization and tourism community for FY15. Visit Billings staff will work with the organization's agency of record on the evolution of the plan.	N/A	Having such a plan is an important part of any fiscal year's success. This annual marketing report allows staff to thoroughly go through the process of planning, preparing, facilitating and implementing destination strategies for an 'on-the-ground' marketing blueprint for FY15. The FY15 Marketing Plan and Budget that are completed in May of the previous FY and approved in June of the previous FY are for strategic and inspirational purposes in many cases. The Marketing Plan and Budget offer a strong 60,000 foot view of the Visit Billings FY plan. This secondary report, is a road map with a full plan of attack for	Response to vanity URLs, landing pages, in office inquiries and mailing requests along with Smith Travel Research reports are some of the means success is measured for Visit Billings.		\$3,500.00	No	

					the next FY. It lays out campaigns for print and social media, for more successful orientation and facilitation.					
Marketing Support	Cooperative Marketing	Yes	Visit Billings will continue to partner with Southeast Montana Tourism on consumer travel shows deemed relevant to its market. Shows include but are not limited to: Rocky Mountain International Roundup, National Tour Association, Tourism Alliance Partners, etc. Productive partnerships with other Regions/CVB's will be pursued when appropriate as well.	TBD	TBD	Unique website visits, landing pages for specific campaigns, social media interaction, and room demand via the Smith Travel Research (STR) Report, will assist the team in measuring and evaluating success in print and online/digital marketing efforts.		\$30,000.00	Yes	
Marketing Support	Printed Material	Yes	Printed materials are important to the orientation and facilitation process. Visitor Guides, maps, brochures and applications all assist the visitor in planning and executing a successful trip. The Visit Billings 2/4 wheel loop tour map will be reprinted in FY15. The Visit Billings team will design, print and distribute a historic map that will better highlight the community's historical amenities.	Such printed materials as the maps/brochures mentioned here are key for visitor facilitation. As guided by the Montana Office of Tourism and ITRR reports, the Visit Billings team is very aware of the necessary collateral for a successful visitor experience. Such maps and brochures will help travelers build their itineraries, lengthen their stays potentially and have a great experience in Billings and beyond. <u>Please note:</u> There is a full report on research for Billings attached in a separate segment of this document.	Multi-use maps and brochures that focus on driving, walking and truly enjoying a destination are crucial to the visitor experience. Such pieces allow the Visit Billings team to properly facilitate a visitor's stay. Such maps and brochures will feature a guided experience for the traveler in order to show photographs, tell stories, and direct to websites and apps when and where appropriate. There will be on-line components of both projects submitted here.	As these tools assist in the visitor facilitation, volunteers and also frontline staff as tourism attractions depicted on the printed materials will assist in measuring success. The on-line components as seen at www.VisitBillings.com will be tracked, too.		\$5,600.00	Yes	
Marketing Support	Opportunity Marketing	No	Opportunity dollars will be utilized per later approval based on project(s) that are presented to the Visit Billings team in FY15.	TBD	TBD	TBD		\$10,000.00	Yes	
				Advertisements and the Billings Visitor Guide contain reference to a Toll-Free Hotline that rings into the Billings Visitor Information Center (VIC). The number is intended for fielding visitor questions.	The Visit Billings team, together with the organization's advertising agency of record (AD Creative Group) and guidance per the Montana Office of Tourism (Strategic Plan), have identified Billings' regional travel audience as a top target in which to increase visitation. In order to better reach					

Marketing Support	Fulfillment/Telemarketing	Yes	<p>State Fulfillment - \$21,800 Fulfillment by Contractor - \$17,300 Postage - \$4,500</p> <p>Visitor Center Expenses - \$1,100 Toll Free Line - \$1,100</p>	<p>While the hotline is not intended for administration or meeting and convention recruitment facilitation, there are times when the team is working with city-wide conventions and/or rallies and the need to offer such access to the VIC is necessary.</p> <p>Access is important to orientation and facilitation of the prospect visitor or visitor. Research from the Montana Office of Tourism, ITRR and Billings' Randall Travel Marketing supports the need to be sure people have easy access to the information they need to properly build and execute their trip itineraries.</p>	<p>potential visitors to Montana and Billings, the CVB contracts with Certified Folder Display (CFD) to help distribute the Billings Visitor Guide in key markets including other parts of Montana, Western North and South Dakota and Northern Wyoming. Certified Folder plays a strong role in the successful distribution of Visit Billings printed materials making sure the Billings' Visitor Guide is readily available at rest stops, hotels, and the like for potential visitors to enjoy and guide them along their journey.</p> <p>Meantime, statistics and/or any needed details regarding staffing and the toll free line items are available on file at the Billings Chamber/Visit Billings office. The Billings VIC Toll Free Number is: 800-711-2630.</p>	<p>It is important that the Visit Billings team be able to report how many callers are utilizing this number. That number is tracked internally and can be reported to MTOT or TAC as necessary.</p>	\$22,900.00	Yes
Marketing Support	Administration						\$62,000.00	Yes
							\$310,000.00	

Marketing Method Budget

Marketing Segment	Marketing Method	Bed tax funded budget	Non bed tax funded budget
Consumer	Print Advertising	\$79,000.00	\$450,000.00
Consumer	Webpage Marketing/SEO/SEM	\$0.00	\$12,000.00
Consumer	Online/Digital Advertising	\$18,000.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Website/Internet Development/Updates	\$0.00	\$33,400.00
Consumer	Photo/Video Library	\$5,000.00	\$29,000.00
		\$102,000.00	\$524,400.00
Film	Opportunity Marketing	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00
		\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00
Group Marketing	Print Advertising	\$56,500.00	\$105,000.00
Group Marketing	Travel/Trade Shows	\$0.00	\$62,500.00
		\$56,500.00	\$167,500.00
Marketing Support	Printed Material	\$5,600.00	\$105,500.00
Marketing Support	Administration	\$62,000.00	\$393,650.00
Marketing Support	Fulfillment/Telemarketing	\$22,900.00	\$11,000.00
Marketing Support	DMAI	\$3,000.00	\$6,000.00
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	\$3,500.00	\$1,000.00
Marketing Support	Marketing Plan Development	\$3,500.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Opportunity Marketing	\$10,000.00	\$195,500.00
Marketing Support	Research	\$10,000.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Cooperative Marketing	\$30,000.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	VIC Funding/Staffing/Signage	\$0.00	\$8,600.00
		\$150,500.00	\$721,250.00
		\$310,000.00	\$1,415,150.00

Miscellaneous Attachments

File Name	Description	File Size
Visit Billings FY 15 Marketing Plan_Low Res.pdf (2.4 MB)	Visit Billings Marketing Plan and Budget	2.4 MB

Region/CVB Required Documents

File Name	Description	File Size
RequireddocumentsFY15.doc (56 KB)	To be completed form.	56 KB

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