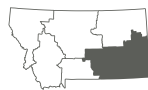




# **MARKETING TOOLBOX**

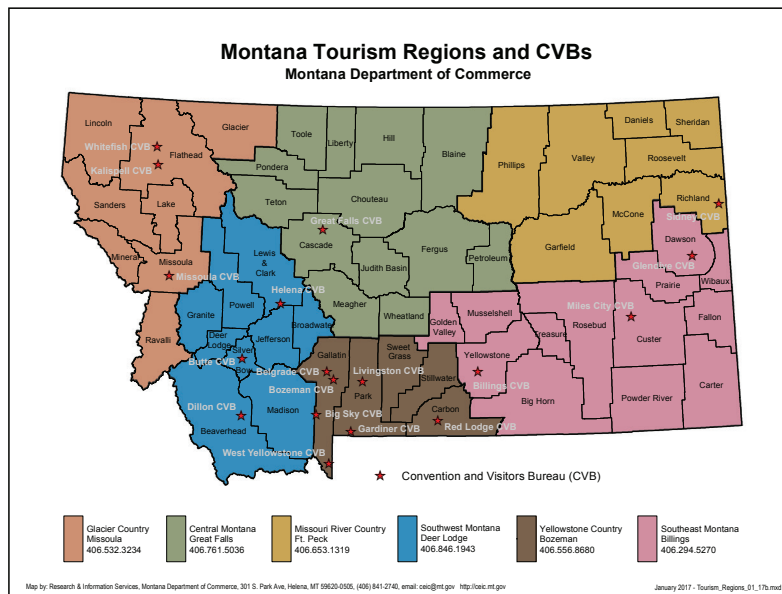
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VISIT SOUTHEAST  
MONTANA

# WHAT IS VISIT SOUTHEAST MONTANA?

Visit Southeast Montana (SEMT) is one of six tourism regions in Montana. As such Visit SEMT, serves as a conduit between the small towns and Convention Visitors Bureaus (CVBs), like Billings, Miles City and Glendive, and the Marketing Team at the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD).



## MISSION STATEMENT

To increase visitor to Southeast Montana by increasing awareness of our region, showcasing cultural heritage, developing memorable experiences and educating our residents about the economic benefits of tourism

## VISION STATEMENT - HOW WE WILL ACCOMPLISH OUR MISSION:

Southeast Montana will become the trusted source for free-spirited travelers to achieve their legendary life experiences.

We work with you – our Tourism Partners – across the region to accomplish this.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Prior to 2012 the Visit Southeast Montana organization was known as Custer Country. The Billings Chamber of Commerce manages the contract for Visit Southeast Montana.

# WHAT DOES VISIT SOUTHEAST MONTANA DO?

As a DMO—Destination Management Organization—Visit Southeast Montana uses state marketing dollars (as allocated by Montana Lodging Tax revenues) to promote the Southeast Montana region, under the Montana brand, to the targeted audience(s).

Basically, that means that we market the entire region (see map on previous page) for YOU. However, we believe that every single partnership strengthens the overall marketing efforts.


Also, we send weekly e-blasts called News You Can Use to you, our Tourism Partners, sharing important information like:

- + Grant opportunities
- + Board meeting notices
- + Annual marketing workshops
- + Notices like “new travel guide has arrived”
- + And much more

Sign up to receive News You Can Use by sending an email to: [mhoffman@southeastmontana.com](mailto:mhoffman@southeastmontana.com)

This Toolbox outlines the marketing methods that elevate Visit Southeast Montana’s tourism partners. Please use it to your advantage. Ask questions. Provide suggestions.

We are open to your input.



## VISIT SOUTHEAST MONTANA

What you will see this week in News You Can Use

- Marketing Tip of the Week
- Montana Historic Preservation Grant Program Opportunities and Webinar
- 2020 Event Grant Application Cycle Now Open
- William B. Pratt Endowment Fund Currently Accepting Grant Applications
- Wednesday Webinar Series Hosted by the Tourism Grant Program
- Historical Society - Montana Museum Act Boosts Economic Development/Tourism
- 2019 Montana Dinosaur Trail Highlights and Looking Ahead in 2020
- 2020 Business of Outdoor Recreation Summit - Sept. 14-16
- ITRR - Montana Tourism 2019 Preliminary Report
- Promote Your Southeast Montana Event





Photo credit: [@drobinson\\_mt](#)

**Marketing Tip of the Week**  
How To Display Your Products. Whether a trade show, farmers market, craft fair or retail setting, how you display your products has a direct impact on your business. Read the full article [here](#).



## VISIT SOUTHEAST MONTANA

What you will see this week in News You Can Use

- Marketing Tip of the Week
- Visit Southeast Montana Updates
- Eastern Montana Tourism Partner Initiative - Dark Night Skies
- Commerce Department Announces Investments in Native American Economic Development Services
- U.S. Census Bureau to Increase Field Wages for Montana Workers in December
- Montana State Parks Foundation Fundraiser
- Montana Main Street Program FY20 Application Cycle Now Open
- Big Sky Trust Fund (BSTF) Economic Development Grant Opportunities
- Agriculture Innovation Center Program
- Visit Billings Grant Opportunities
- Visit Southeast Montana Visitation Numbers Request
- Promote Your Southeast Montana Event




Photo credit: [Nathan Saltran](#)

**Marketing Tip of the Week**  
Southeast Montana will send news releases to local media free of charge for tourism news-worthy events related to organizations within the region. Keep in mind that weekly outlets many need a 10-day advance notice. For more information contact [brenda@southeastmontana.com](mailto:brenda@southeastmontana.com).

# VISIT SOUTHEAST MONTANA & VISIT MONTANA WEBSITES

[southeastmontana.com](http://southeastmontana.com) | [visitmt.com](http://visitmt.com)

Visit Southeast Montana's website is an independent site, designed to inspire, motivate and facilitate leisure visitation to the region. We do partner with the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD) to **provide detailed listings for all tourism-related businesses and attractions** within the Southeast Montana region. These listings are free of charge but you are in control of your content. Here are a few items to note:

- + Access existing or create a new account at: [business.visitmt.com/default.aspx](http://business.visitmt.com/default.aspx) or access via [semtpartners.com/marketing](http://semtpartners.com/marketing).
- + Once the listing is created, it will also appear on the Montana Office of Tourism website at [visitmt.com](http://visitmt.com) then automatically propagate to [southeastmontana.com](http://southeastmontana.com).
- + Update your image, hours of operation and other details on a quarterly basis. Fresh and accurate content is essential.
- + Keep your user name/password in a safe, but memorable place—re-creating it can be challenging and time-consuming.
- + Verify your listing – it may take a few days to update – and connect if you have questions or difficulties.
- + Contact Carmen Williams if you need assistance: 406-841-2870 or [carmenwilliams@mt.gov](mailto:carmenwilliams@mt.gov).

In FY19, [southeastmontana.com](http://southeastmontana.com) had nearly **150,000 page views** from **87,327 visitors**. We anticipate reaching as many or more in FY20. Visit Southeast Montana's marketing campaign drives traffic directly to this site, so this is one of your best, no-cost options to promote your business, event or attraction.

## DID YOU KNOW?

According to Adobe Digital Insights travel industry market research, 41% of business and 60% of leisure travel arrangements are now made online.

## FAMILIARIZATION TOURS

Visit Southeast Montana's **publicity program** works with both national and international travel media to cultivate editorial coverage on Southeast Montana in all forms of media (print, digital, social, broadcast – TV and radio). One mechanism for doing this is to conduct escorted media or fam (familiarization) trips, organized around activities, notable events, themes within the region or focused on a community and its offerings.

Another, emerging but increasingly effective method is using **Social Media Influencers**. These are contracted brand ambassadors, who travel throughout the region, via a Southeast Montana-provided, itinerary, and create, post and promote digital content.

We work closely with the region's communities and tourism-related businesses to identify appropriate tours and secure complimentary or discounted services during these trips. Tourism-related businesses can get involved by providing complimentary or discounted services which will give travel writers and tour operators the best experience possible in Southeast Montana, encouraging them to include our region in their media or organization.

In return, it is likely that your business or organization will be mentioned in the resulting earned media. Keep in mind that, unlike paid media, earned media is editorial. While we can make recommendations, the ultimate decision on content lies in the hands of the content creator and editorial staff.




### FUN FACT

According to mentionlytics.com, consumers are 5x more likely to make a purchase when recommended by a social media influencer.

# NEWS RELEASES & SOCIAL MEDIA

Southeast Montana is always looking for news-worthy stories, events and the like to pitch to journalists and bloggers. Plus, we will send **news releases** to local media free of charge for tourism news-worthy events within the region. Keep in mind that weekly outlets many need a 10-day advance notice. Alternatively, we are happy to share our media list with you – simply ask.

We also maintain three social media platforms – Facebook, Instagram & Twitter – promote **strategic branded content** based on the pillars (outdoor recreation, western authenticity, historical significance, dinosaur adventures and American Indian culture), paid posts and UGC (user generated content – via social media influencers, bloggers and the like). While we do mine for content, we always welcome your input.

- +   @southeastmontana
- +  @visitsemontana

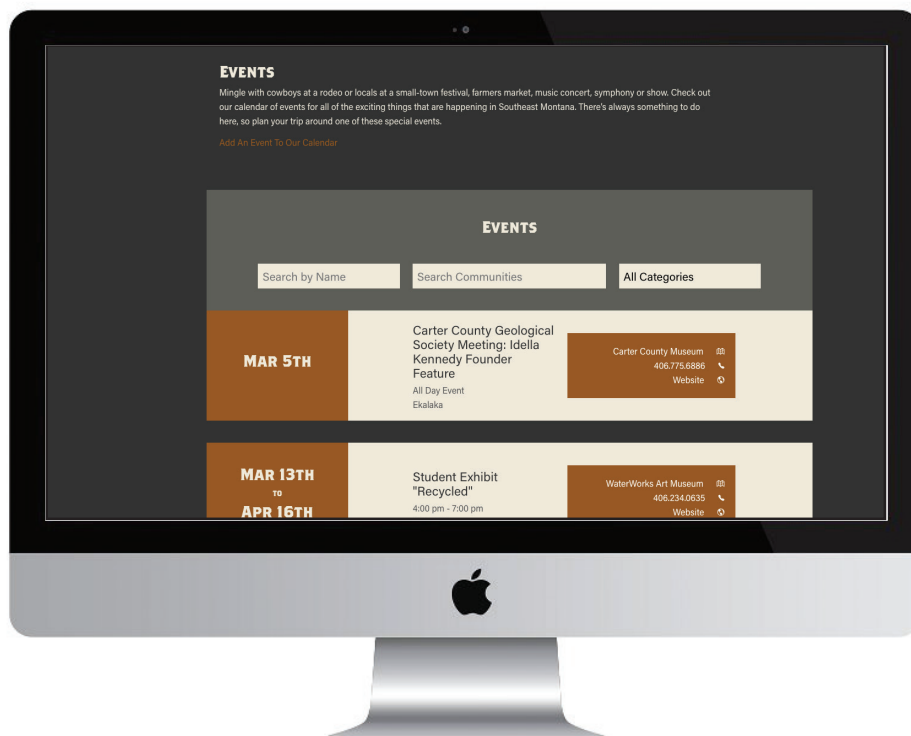


# PROMOTE EVENTS

Visit Southeast Montana promotes "signature events" such as the Bucking Horse Sale and Crow Fair. We also support community events that draw visitors or attendees from more than 50 miles away and that meet the criteria (as defined by Visit Southeast Montana's Board in April 2020). Keep in mind that not every community event is of interest to travelers.

In addition, if you have an event, be sure to

- 1) Include Visit Southeast Montana as a co-host on Facebook, so that we can help extend the reach of your event post. We are always happy to discuss ways to promote to our target audience.
- 2) List the event, at no cost, on both [southeastmontana.com](https://southeastmontana.com) using this link: [southeastmontana.com/events](https://southeastmontana.com/events).
- 3) Submit the event to [visitmt.com](https://visitmt.com), see [marketmt.com/TourismRegionsCVBs/Resources](https://marketmt.com/TourismRegionsCVBs/Resources) and scroll down to "Business Tools."

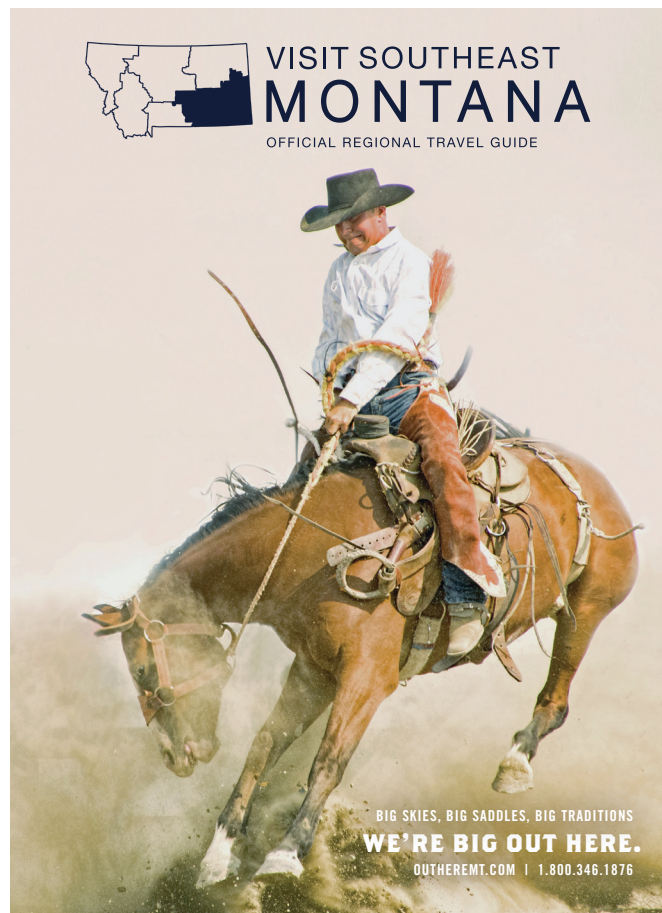


# SOUTHEAST MONTANA TRAVEL GUIDE

In 2020, we are printing **60,000 copies** of the guide and will distribute them throughout northern Wyoming, western South Dakota and at select locations in Montana. Additionally, these guides are sent to those who inquire via Visit Southeast Montana's website or toll-free phone line. We also distribute guides through the (4) regional Visitor Information Centers, via regional conferences and at travel shows.

If you would like to have guides at your location, call **1-800-346-1876** to request a bulk order. Or, submit a request via [semtpartners.com](http://semtpartners.com) and see "Order Bulk Guides" under Resources. There is no fee for the guides, nor is there a fee to have them sent bulk.

Place your business, event or organization in front of visitors as they plan their trip or while they are traveling throughout the region with advertising in the guide. Connect with Kristen Sacket at [kristen@windfallstudio.com](mailto:kristen@windfallstudio.com) for a rate card or to discuss options.





# PHOTOS

Today's marketing strategies need strong imagery and Visit Southeast Montana is continually adding to its [Image Library](#). The Board of Directors has developed a usage policy, which you can view on [semtpartners.com](#) then "About Us" and "Board Policies."

To request an image, go to [semtpartners.com](#) then "In the News" and click on "Photo Request." We are happy to discuss via email and or phone, also.

We do attempt to have an annual photo shoot in the region, as budget allows. We connect mainly with Chambers and CVB directors to choreograph these shoots.

If you have high-resolution images that we can use, we would love to talk.

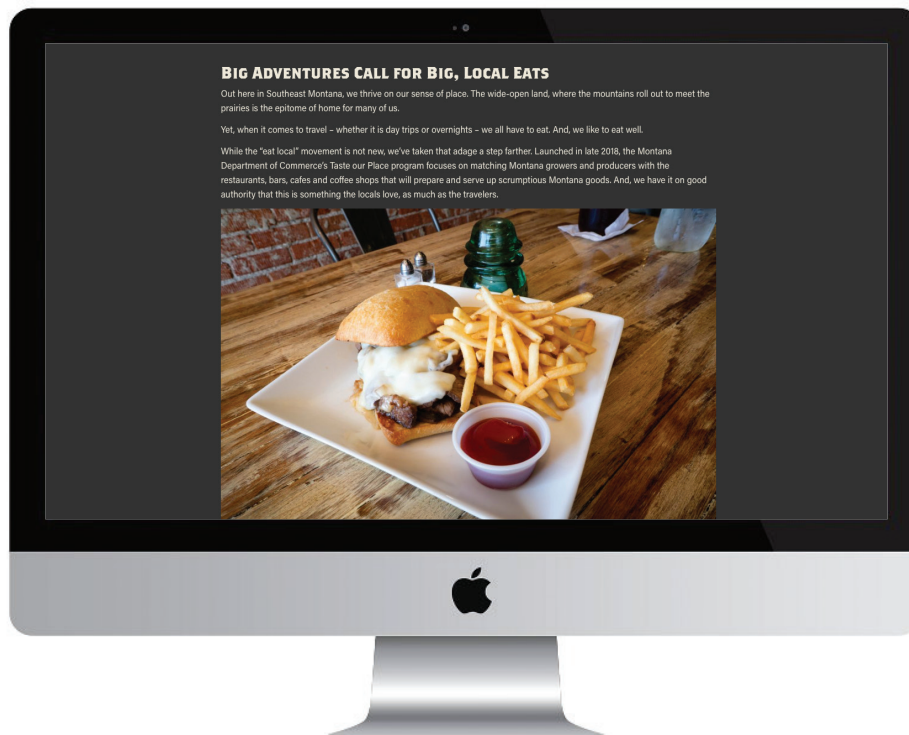
Above all else, Visit Southeast Montana values the relationship we create with regional photographers and is especially vigilant about always providing photo credit.



# BLOG AND NEWSLETTER

We have a **consumer database of ~17,500 consumer contacts**, to whom we send an inspirational **e-newsletter** 1-2 times per month. This information is also posted as blog content at [southeastmontana.com/blog](http://southeastmontana.com/blog) and through our social channels.

The blog is a relatively **new feature** on Visit Southeast Montana's website and continues to gain popularity as we add content. We have editorial planned for the remainder of the calendar year but are always open to suggestions. In addition, it helps if you follow the blog and share. If you want to receive the consumer newsletter, simply contact us or scroll the bottom of [southeastmontana.com](http://southeastmontana.com) and click on "newsletter."



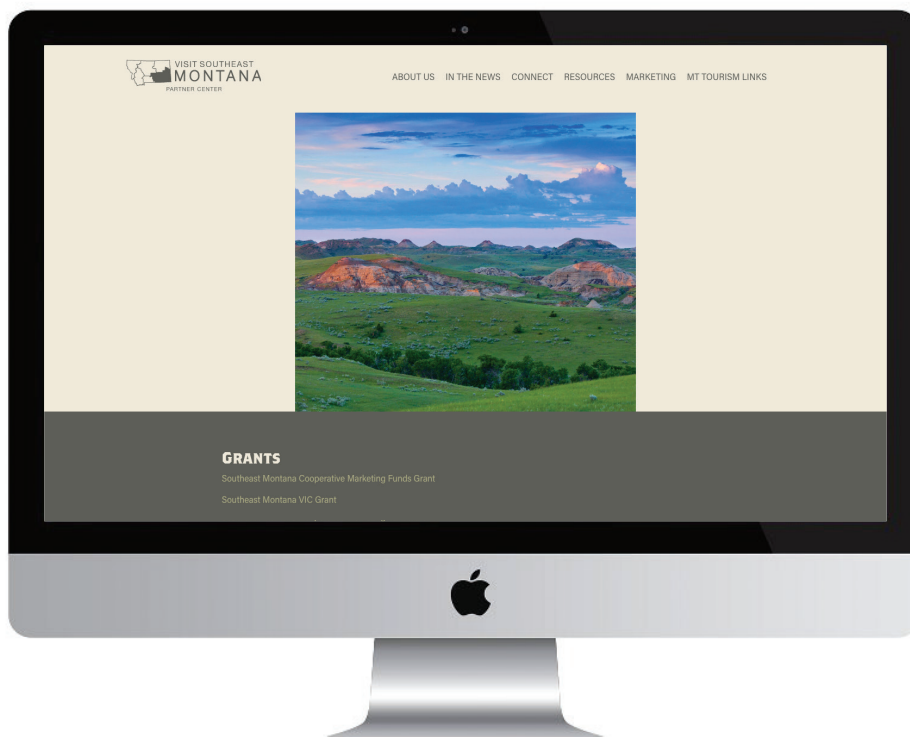
# GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

The Visit Southeast Montana Board of Directors, when financially feasible, provides funding for **Cooperative Marketing Grants** and **Visitor Information Center (VIC) Grants**.

The marketing grants are 50-50 match (available to non-profit organizations) and follow strict guidelines for objectives and reporting. The VIC grants are specific to the gateway (Wibaux, Hardin and Broadus) Visitor Information Centers. Additional information, such as submission timelines and deadlines, are detailed on each application.

Both applications are available on [semtpartners.com](http://semtpartners.com)

Additionally, the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development offers tourism grants, typically due Sept. 1, annually. Learn more at: [marketmt.com/grants](http://marketmt.com/grants)



# RESEARCH

All good marketing plans start with solid research. The Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development continues to purchase more data, which you can find here:

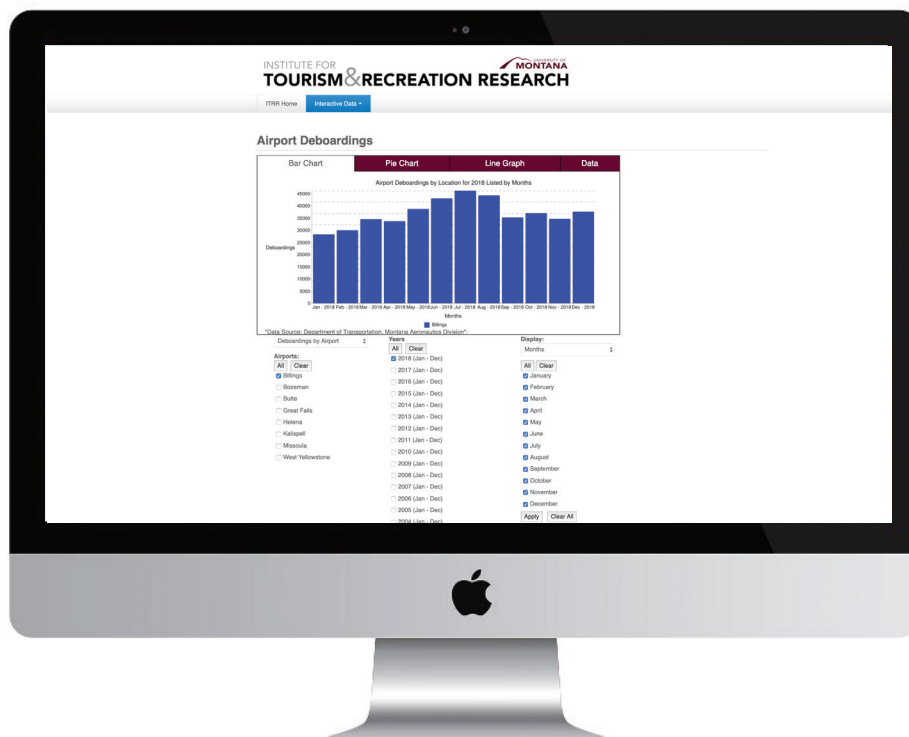
[marketmt.com/Programs/Marketing/TourismResearch](http://marketmt.com/Programs/Marketing/TourismResearch)

Additionally, a portion of Montana's lodging tax supports the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR), which completes tourism-specific research each year. ITRR also offers a "Survey in a Box" or survey kit to collect valuable data about attendees at a specific event.

Learn more or request a survey kit at: <http://itr.umd.edu/>

Recently the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development launched the Eastern Montana Initiative. You can access data about visitor travel in specific locations via this dashboard: [marketmt.com/Programs/Marketing/TourismResearch](http://marketmt.com/Programs/Marketing/TourismResearch)

To learn more about the initiative itself, see: [marketmt.com/Resources/Eastern-Montana-Tourism-Partner-Initiative](http://marketmt.com/Resources/Eastern-Montana-Tourism-Partner-Initiative)



# HOW YOU CAN HELP VISIT SOUTHEAST MONTANA

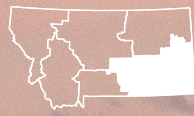
We love to connect with you, our tourism partners, and know what is happening in your community. Here are a few **tips** to help stay **connected**:

- + Stay informed! Read and share the weekly newsletter [News You Can Use](#).
- + If you want to be included in these weekly e-blasts, simply send us an email request.
- + Know your county's representative on the Visit Southeast Board of Directors (listed on [semtpartners.com](#)), share information with him/her.
- + Connect socially, including events – strong imagery helps.
- + Attend marketing workshops and invite others.
- + Share visitation numbers annually (we request every January) – these numbers help us track trends at a regional level.
- + Consider being a film ambassador for your county.
- + Be open to new tourism initiatives like Taste Our Place, Made in Montana and Native American Made in Montana. Contact is Susan Joy: [406-841-2868](tel:406-841-2868) or [susan.joy@mt.gov](mailto:susan.joy@mt.gov).
- + Inquire about agri-tourism—there is demand for that “product” in Montana. Contact Tami Burke of Great Northern Corporation at [fadc@gndc.or](mailto:fadc@gndc.or) or [406-480-2819](tel:406-480-2819). Share this Marketing Toolbox with other Tourism Partners in your community.
- + Become familiar with [semtpartners.com](#).
- + Always feel free to contact us if you have questions.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For information from the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development, see: [marketmt.com/TourismRegionsCVBs/Resources](http://marketmt.com/TourismRegionsCVBs/Resources)

To learn more about Montana Tourism Regions and CVBs, see: [marketmt.com/TourismRegionsCVBs](http://marketmt.com/TourismRegionsCVBs)



VISIT SOUTHEAST  
**MONTANA**

**Southeast Montana Tourism**

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Office: 406-294-5270 | Fax: 406-245-7333

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