

MARKETING PLAN & BUDGET

2024 – 2025



Montana DarkStar Photography



VISIT SOUTHEAST
MONTANA

SOUTHEASTMONTANA.COM | 1.800.346.1876
#NowhereBetter | #SoutheastMontana



Ian Hanson



Visit Southeast Montana



Sharon Borla

WHAT IS VISIT SOUTHEAST MONTANA?

WE'RE BIG OUT HERE

That is what a visit to Southeast Montana promises. Wide-open spaces. Historical stories. Deeply-rooted traditions. And, adventures as varied as stars in the vast night skies.

Out here, Big Sky meets big adventure. It's the kind of place to slow down and fall in love with Montana. It's the kind of place where cowboys still ride horses across the open plains. It's the kind of place where dinosaur fossils are waiting to be discovered and history is rooted in the land. It's the kind of place where visitors can steep in the myriad colors of a prairie sunset and feel the drum beat that nourished the indigenous tribes for generations.

NOWHERE BETTER

Some might say Southeast Montana is nowhere near anything else. We say, when NOWHERE is full of awe-inspiring sights of beauty, history, culture and adventure, there's NOWHERE BETTER to discover the real Montana.

Southeast Montana is a region of complexities and juxtapositions, a land of vast, open spaces, a place of surprising twists and turns as unexpected as the flowing rivers. The region is a small portion of the Crow Tribe's ancestral land and modern-day home to the Northern Cheyenne nation. It is ranching, spread farther than naked eyes can see, dotted with small communities more than a century old, many of which are experiencing rejuvenation and growth.

From the state's largest city, Billings, with its walkable downtown and expansive growth along the middle Yellowstone River, to one of the smallest towns, like Ekalaka, which created its identity from the very fossils found in the surrounding area, the Southeast Montana region offers visitors niche experiences of the real Montana.

The Yellowstone River, the longest undammed river in the lower 48 states, flows through the region, alongside I-94 to North Dakota – this is the same route that Capt. Lewis Clark used to navigate back to St. Louis, and includes his timeless signature carved into **Pompeys Pillar**. Today we can dare to explore the same river using the **Lower Yellowstone River Trail** (still under development by Montana FWP). Other rivers, like the **Tongue** and **Bighorn**, which flow north into Montana, are dammed and create recreational oases. The massive **Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area**, which contains the 71-miles long Bighorn Lake (locally known as Yellowtail) beneath towering 1,000-foot-high red cliffs, dwarfs and stuns visitors with its raw beauty.

It is this ruggedness, this stark contrast of seemingly benign rolling prairies and flowing rivers that gives way to natural breaks and unexpected **Eastern Montana badlands**.

Created by prehistoric rivers, the **Terry Badlands** and **Makoshika State Park** badlands, hold more secrets to be discovered amongst crevices and coulees. Explore them by day or watch as the setting sun stains the land in elusive and nearly indescribable shades of mauve, pink and gold.

Nighttime provides another opportunity to be awed by Southeast Montana. Visit any one of the 40-plus locations along **Montana's Trail to the Stars** and be mesmerized by incredible views of star beyond compare. **Medicine Rocks State Park**, located between Baker and Ekalaka, stands as the anchor site of this trail and only one of two International Dark-Skies designated locations in the state.



Ian Hanson

Southeast Montana is rich in history, with the **Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument** (operated by NPS) serving ~250,000 visitors each year. With nearly 20 museums and cultural centers, the history buff can spend days in the region. [Our history maps](#) help navigate this journey, as will the upcoming Trail to the Little Bighorn project. As a bonus, many museums are no-cost and docents are locals who love sharing the story of the community with visitors.

While dinosaurs once roamed these craggy lands, they never get old out here. From a personal dig on private property to the award-winning annual Shindig in Ekalaka, to the **Montana Dinosaur Trail** allows both the young—and the young-at-heart—to find an experience to treasure in Southeast Montana. Most recently, the Musselshell Museum in Roundup added a paleontological exhibit and is working to join the **Montana Dinosaur Trail**.

Signature events like the Miles City Bucking Horse Sale, Buzzard Day (Makoshika), Reenactment of the Battle of Little Bighorn, Roundup Independence Day Extravaganza (RIDE), Crow Fair & Powwow and NILE Rodeo bring visitors from across the globe to Southeast Montana. Newer, smaller events like the Makoshika Triathlon continue to attract a more interactive and competitive crowd.

Those visiting Southeast Montana can taste Montana in nearly every town by following the **Southeast Montana Burger Trail** (which will be expanded with a digital application in FY24). While in Billings, the **Brew Trail** and newly expanded **Trailhead Treats** offer alternatives. Plus, the region is home to several James Beard Award nominees and winners – and not just where one would expect – but also in small towns, as demonstrated at **The Backporch** in Roundup.

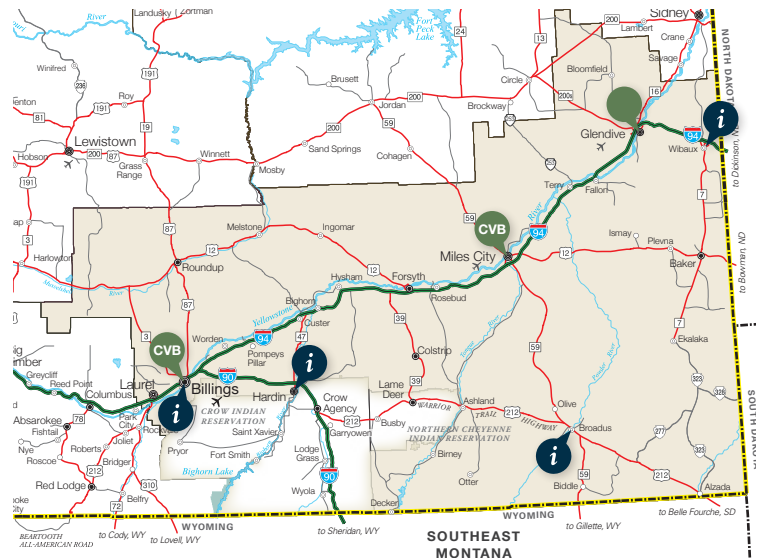
Southeast Montana is a place of Big Space and Big Tastes—and we say, there's **Nowhere Better**.



WHO WE ARE

A BRIEF HISTORY

Originally called “Custer Country,” Visit Southeast Montana began in 1984 as an organization charged with helping bring tourists to the region. It was named for one of its most famous attractions, the Little Bighorn Battlefield. In 1987 the Montana Legislature enacted a 4 percent Lodging Facility Use Tax to fund tourism promotion organizations. At that time, Custer Country became one of six state-funded tourism regions in the state. This organization continued to market the 13 counties and two Indian Reservations of Southeast Montana until 2010. The Billings Chamber of Commerce received the contract from the Montana Department of Commerce to manage the region and the organization moved from Forsyth to Billings. In 2012, the Custer Country Board of Directors voted to change the name of the region to “Visit Southeast Montana.”



MISSION OF VISIT SOUTHEAST MONTANA:

The mission of Visit Southeast Montana is to increase tourism to Southeast Montana by increasing the awareness of our region, showcasing our cultural heritage, developing memorable experiences and educating our residents about the economic benefits of tourism.

VISION OF VISIT SOUTHEAST MONTANA:

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

THE ORGANIZATION

Visit Southeast Montana is a nonprofit organization managed by the Billings Chamber of Commerce. We serve as a voice for Southeast Montana’s tourism and hospitality industries, seeking to promote the region’s many attractions, events and communities while ensuring that tourism is recognized as one of the region’s top economic drivers, especially when changes to local and state-wide legislation are considered. Visit Southeast Montana consists of two full-time staff members under contract with the Montana Department of Commerce and is directed by a board consisting of no more than 21 members from across the region. Visit Southeast Montana partners with the region’s three Convention & Visitors Bureaus (Billings, Miles City and Glendive) along with hoteliers, chambers of commerce and other tourism-related entities including state parks, county and federal organizations, plus private businesses ranging from coffee shops and restaurants to guide services, art galleries and private tour operators. The stakeholders and tourism partners of Southeast Montana provide the essence, flavor, identity and unique character of the region.

THE MONTANA BRAND CONSISTS OF THREE PILLARS:

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

Visit Southeast Montana aligns with the Montana Brand in a plethora of ways. Makoshika State Park, Terry Badlands Wilderness Study Area and Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area boast **spectacular, unspoiled nature**. These vast and stunning public lands are complemented with the wide-open spaces where the mountains roll out to meet the prairies and the Yellowstone River freely flows. In addition, Southeast Montana holds **historical beauty** in the Little Bighorn Battlefield and lesser-known historical locations and monuments like Rosebud Battlefield State Park, Tongue River Reservoir State Park and Four Dances Recreation Area.

We offer **vibrant and evolving small towns** – from Roundup to Baker, Forsyth to Hardin and Miles City to Baker – each with its own unique charm. Glendive is not only the gateway to Makoshika State Park, it and Wibaux, are the gateways to Montana. Crow Agency, Fort Smith and Hardin also welcome visitors to the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument and Bighorn Canyon. And, of course, we are the home of Billings, Montana’s Trailhead – the state’s largest, incredibly progressive city.

With all these options of **breathtaking experiences by day**, our visitors deserve **relaxing hospitality at night** – including the newly-launched and awarded Montana Trail to the Stars. In Southeast Montana relaxing lodging options range from the luxurious Northern Hotel in Billings to the rustic, historic (and haunted) Kempton Hotel in Terry – the longest continually operating lodging facility in the state. We recently launched the Southeast Montana Burger Trail passport, with more than 20 locations in communities across the region, and two businesses – Veronika’s Bakery and The Backporch in Roundup – were nominees for the prestigious James Beard Awards. Southeast Montana contains all amazing the ingredients necessary for **relaxing hospitality, Montana-style**.



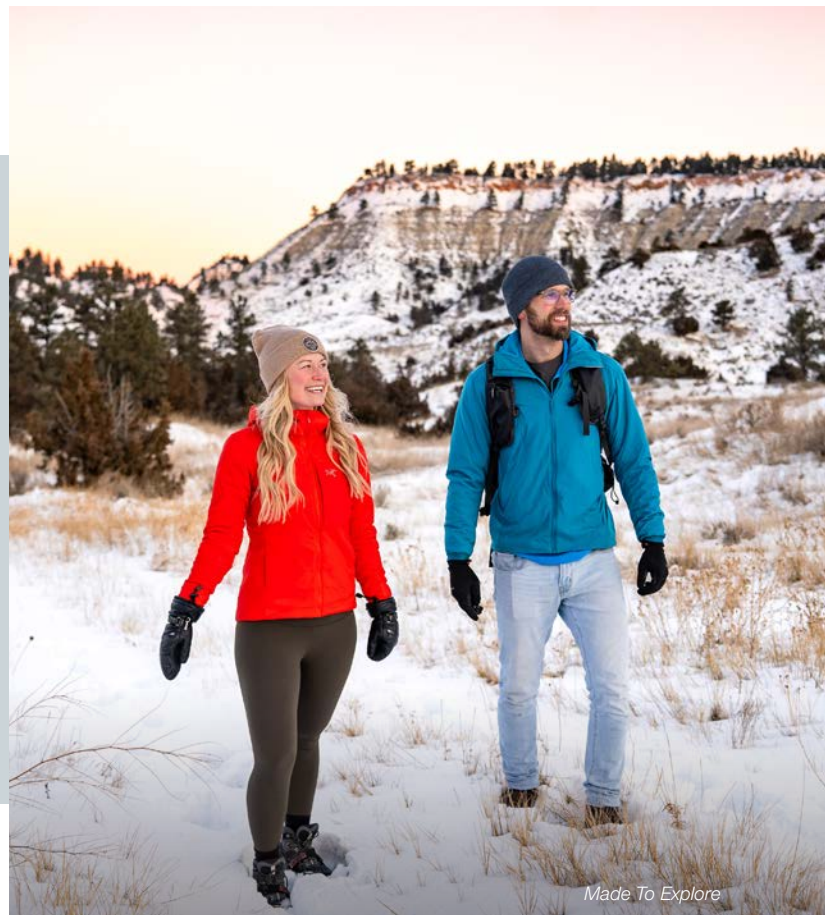
KEY CHARACTERISTICS

This vast region, which is blessed with a diversity of people, geography and cultures, prides itself on connecting with visitors who enjoy our very distinctive characteristics including these strengths (first five are regional pillars):

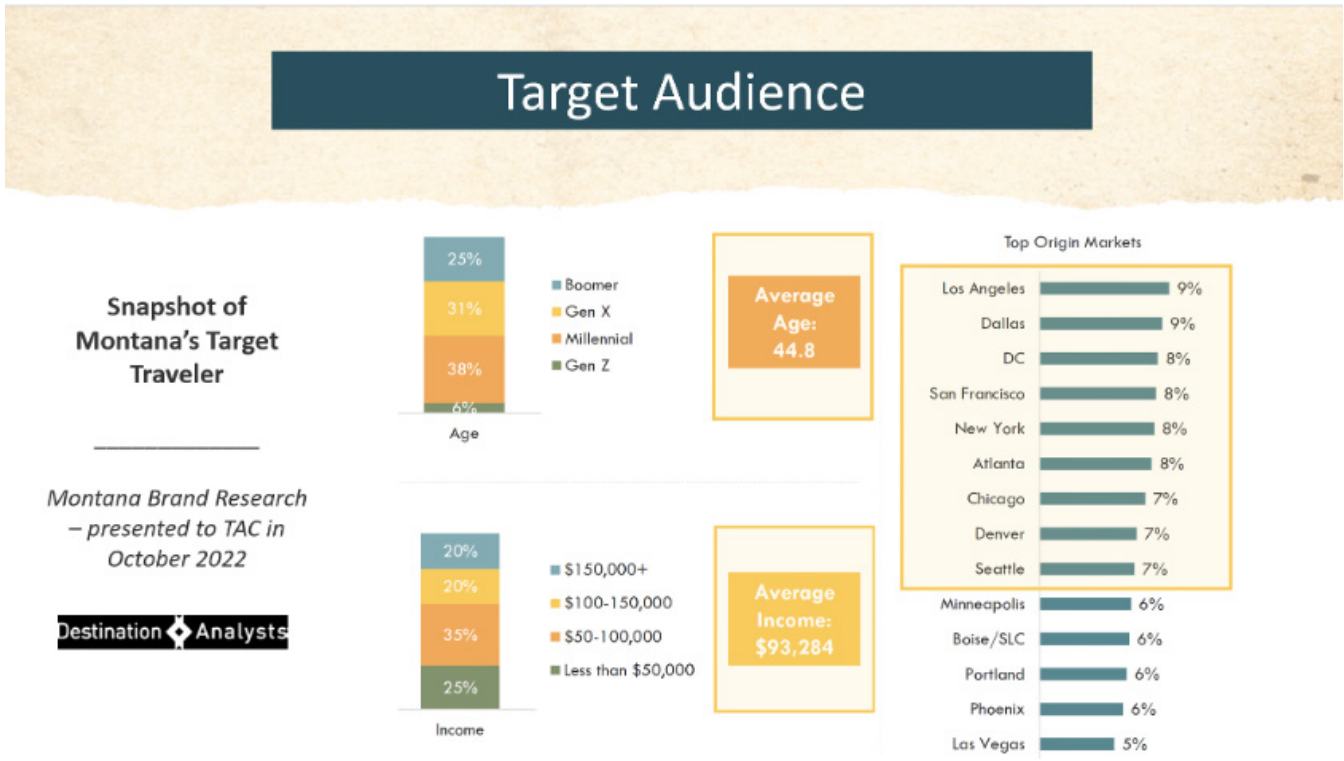
- Outdoor Recreation;
- Historical Significance;
- Western Authenticity;
- Dinosaur Adventures;
- Crow & Northern Cheyenne Culture; and
- Interstates I-90 & I-94 funnel road-trippers into the region, which is “on the way” to YNP, GNP, Mount Rushmore National Monument and Theodore Roosevelt National Monument with Bighorn Battlefield National Monument a desired NPS stop;
- Billings – Montana’s largest city;
- The region has not yet reached tourism capacity and has room to grow;
- Wide-open spaces and plethora of public lands;
- Alignment with Brand MT, which has stated effort to divert visitor traffic away from national parks into all areas of Montana;
- Signature Events – Bucking Horse Sale; Crow Fair; RIDE; Dino Shin Dig – plus new events;
- Destination Development projects that are gaining momentum, such as Southeast Montana Burger Trail; Montana’s Trail to the Stars; (new) Montana’s Great Wide Open; and existing Montana Dinosaur Trail.

AT THE SAME TIME, VISIT SOUTHEAST MONTANA FACES VERY REAL CHALLENGES, INCLUDING:

- Perception that Montana is far away and difficult to travel to;
- We don’t have mountains/perception that Montana is only mountains;
- Distance between services/remote areas;
- Irregular mobile phone coverage/technical infrastructure;
- Regions are confusing and not applicable for travelers; and
- Underdeveloped tourism product(s), i.e. not many formal tours/tour operators



Visit Southeast Montana parallels the **Target Market** identified by Brand MT, as identified here:



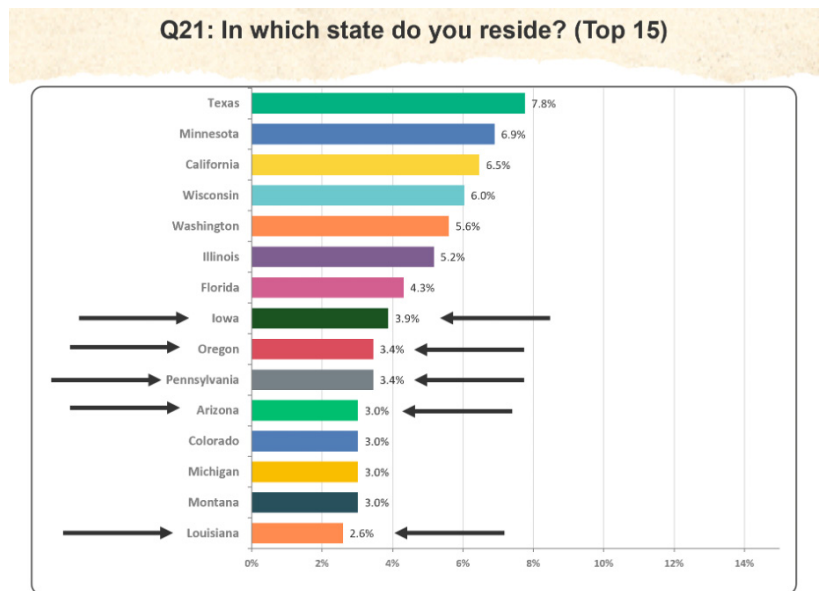
However, Visit SEMT will narrow the **geographic locations** to include:

- Regional travelers - within 10-to-12-hour drive radius of Miles City (center of region) – and Midwestern Roadtrippers
- Travelers on way to/from Yellowstone and/or Glacier National Parks
- Western Montanans, especially outdoor adventurers
- Direct fly markets to BIL

Visit Southeast Montana's Call Center tracks both Top States of Origin and Top Areas of Interest, as shown here:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Top 5 States | Top 5 Interests |
| 1. Wisconsin | 1. Scenic Driving |
| 2. Minnesota | 2. History |
| 3. Michigan | 3. Wildlife |
| 4. Pennsylvania | 4. Little Bighorn Battlefield |
| 5. Illinois | 5. Lewis & Clark Trail |

Note, Texas is typically in the top 5-10 states, too. Additionally, Visit SEMT's annual survey asks the same question of its participants, with similar results and a few emerging markets, as noted by the arrows on the figure to the right.



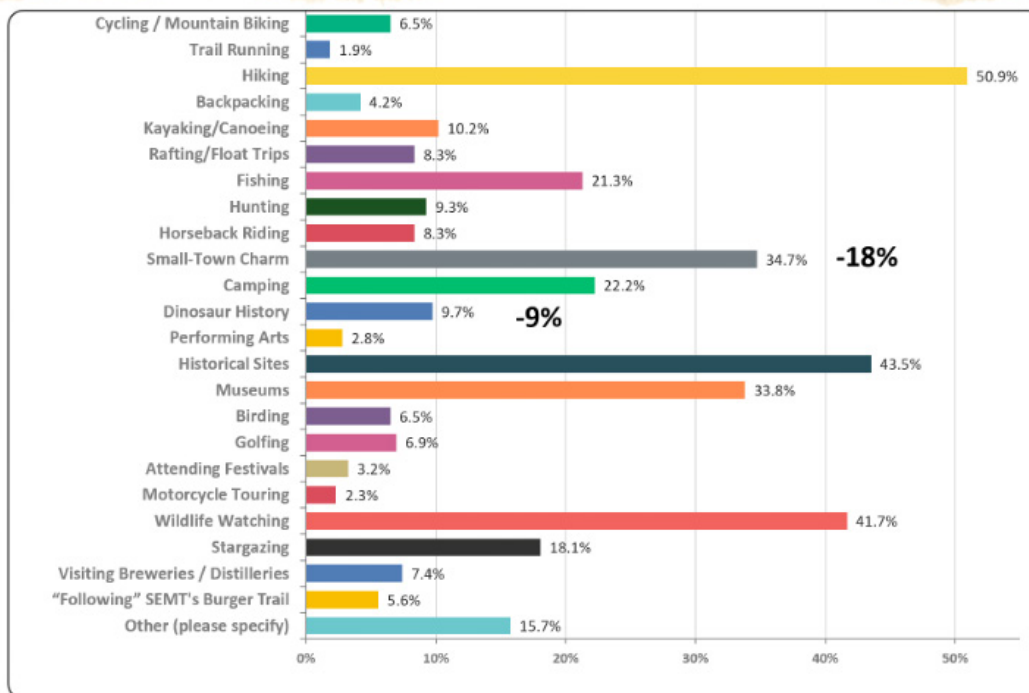
While both ITRR and Visit SEMT's Survey data indicate that most travelers to the region are over age 45, with 56 being the average age, there is a large opportunity to reach targets under age 45. Coupled with data from American Express Travel Research, which notes that 75% of those planning trips use social media as a primary influencer, we will plan to also that age group, but will use a different strategy.

Additionally, we will target those whose behavior matches both Montana's Brand and Visit Southeast Montana's pillars and available activities such as:

- Scenic driving;
- Visiting historic sites, including Little Bighorn Battlefield and Lewis & Clark sites;
- Wildlife watching and/or photography;
- Visiting small town, and
- Outdoor recreation activities such as hiking, biking, kayaking/canoeing; stargazing; camping; and fishing.



Q23: Which of the following recreational activities interest you? Check all that apply.



We also note that according to American Express Travel Research, 89% of those surveyed are looking for a "first-time" destination and 68% are focused on finding lesser-known destinations. Both descriptions fit the Southeast Montana region and will play into website and key word optimization strategies.

Lastly, our annual survey also showed that off-peak travel, specifically September, increased 17% from 2022 to 2023. We anticipated that shift and added a fall photo/video shoot to the FY24 strategy, using "empty nest" models; that content will come into play in FY25.

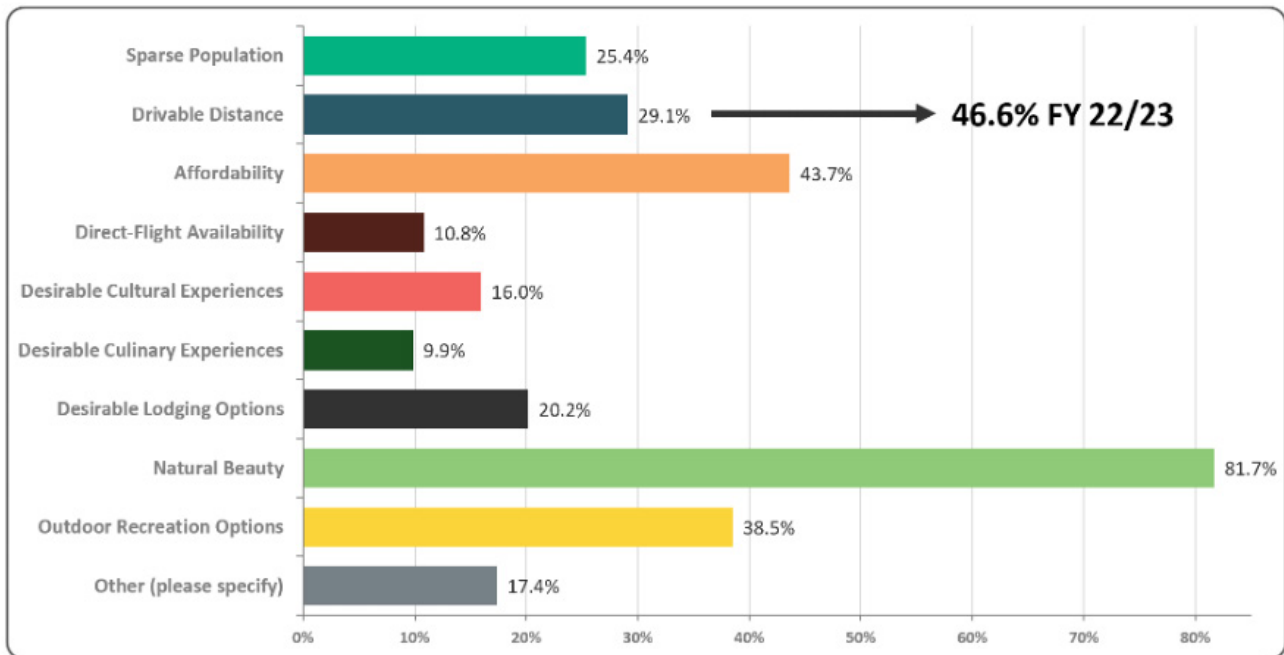
SOURCES

Research from ITRR’s 2023 Nonresident Visitor Surveys, Visit Southeast Montana’s 2023 Visitor’s Survey, and data from Visit Southeast Montana’s Call Center all support Visit Southeast Montana’s strategy as noted above.

We also found some interesting responses during Visit Southeast Montana’s 2023 Visitor’s Survey, specifically 92% stated that they would visit the region again and nearly 76% are “very likely” to recommend the region to a friend. This indicates that re-targeting previous visitors is a strategy to consider.

Those who decided to not travel to the region cited “destinations were too far apart” and “cost of travel” as reasons for their decisions. Lastly, knowing what factors into the decision-making process is helpful and, with two of the top three – natural beauty and outdoor recreation options – aligning with the Southeast Montana region as shown below.

Q22: Which of the following would factor into your decision on where to take your next vacation? Check all that apply.



Lastly, the same Visitor Survey asked “What surprised you the most about Southeast Montana.” We found the varied responses interesting and somewhat entertaining and enlightening – it helps to get inside the mind of our audience.

Q13: What surprised you about Southeast Montana?

- Beautiful scenery and drives
- No sales tax
- Stargazing
- Such a variety of landscapes; not just flat
- Vastness and beauty
- How beautiful it was—hard to believe God made those formations
- How kind the people are
- Rattlesnake signs
- More modern
- Distances between locations
- Breathtaking views
- How much we loved it
- Much better pub selections than we expected
- So spread out, historic and beautiful mountains

EMERGING MARKETS

We continue to pursue previously identified emerging markets of:

- Outdoor Recreationists:
 - Specifically, water sports like kayaking and rafting
 - Lower Yellowstone River water-based trail (FWP is continuing to build out)
- Night Sky Observers/Astrotourism (as own niche market, outside of “outdoor recreation”), and
- Culinary Travelers in support of the Southeast Montana Burger Trail (which received an EMI grant to add a digital passport program) along with Visit Billings’ Brew Trail and Trailhead Treats.

In addition, we will watch for the “skip gen” market, in which grandparents travel with grandchildren. This market specifically matches products like the Montana Dinosaur Trail and the outdoor recreation pillar, including RV travel.



WHAT IS THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF VISIT SOUTHEAST MONTANA AS A DMO?

Visit Southeast Montana is primarily a Destination Marketing Organization (~75%), with basis in promoting regional visitation. At the same time, we are also a Destination Development Organization (~25%).

As we have evolved into this dual identity, we intertwine the destination development projects into the overall marketing campaign, specifically:

- Montana Dinosaur Trail (since 2005);
- Montana's Trail to the Stars;
- Southeast Montana's Burger Trail (new passport in FY24);
- Visit Billings' Brew Trail and Tasty Treats Trail (passports); and
- Montana's Great Wide Open: Badlands to Breaks to Beartooths (May 2024 launch)



Using this integrated approach when we host a blogger/influencer, for example, we will have them stop at one or more Burger Trail locations, include a Dino Trail experience or a Trail to the Stars experience, and/or other products they fit. We will also directly support each product with paid advertising.

This combination allows us – and our tourism partners - to identify, grow and promote “products” that are unique to this corner of Montana – a state with unique natural features from north to south, east to west—that target roadtrippers and fly/drive markets.

As we move into the FY25 marketing plan, we will add Destination Management to the list with expansion into a region-wide Tourism Ambassador program. The Board does not see Destination Stewardship as a top priority at this time; however, that could shift in the future.



OVERALL MARKETING STRATEGY

Visit Southeast Montana strives to increase awareness of and visitation to the Visit Southeast Montana region as a destination for outdoor recreation, historical significance and dinosaur adventures along with Western authenticity plus Crow and Northern Cheyenne culture, as desired by each tribe.

We will follow the Montana Brand while elevating Visit SEMT's pillars and destination development projects to targeted audience, while simultaneously working with tourism partners within the region to grow regional pride and identity, tourism products and awareness.

We will continue to support our regional partners, functioning as the conduit between Brand MT and all the communities of Visit Southeast Montana region. Lastly, we will again survey visitors and potential visitors in the fall of 2024 to glean insights and trends specific to the Visit Southeast Montana region.

In FY25, Visit Southeast Montana will focus on building out from strategic goals, such as creating and sustaining a tourism ambassador program across the region, and to support tourism partners and events, specifically communities and events that receive grants from the Department of Commerce, while also elevating specific products like the Montana Dinosaur Trail and the Southeast Montana Burger Trail. We will execute the FY25 Marketing Plan with these strategic objectives and goals:

STRATEGIC GOAL #1

In FY24 and into FY25 the Department of Commerce is offering event grants. Visit Southeast Montana desires to leverage event grant recipients – and all regional events – and promote these events to those outside the Visit SEMT region.

#1 - Elevate regional events, especially those with capacity to grow (not “signature” events).

Objective 1:

Determine how to quickly, efficiently and effectively identify, gather content/assets and list regional events.

Objective 2:

Identify, in partnership with our AOR, how to elevate events and increase attendance.

Metrics:

Increasing visitation to the Events section of southeastmontana.com by 20% from FY24 to FY25 will make this method a success.

Events, from the Makoshika Youth Basketball Tournament in Glendive to Rockin’ the Corner in Terry, drive visitation. Following the State’s lead on elevating tourism events, we will collaborate with event organizers and develop a strategy for Visit Southeast Montana to help promote events outside of the region. We believe that lack of content may be an obstacle, so we will plan ahead for beyond FY25, too.



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STRATEGIC GOAL #2

As identified via the Resiliency Plan and at the FY24 Board Retreat, Visit Southeast Montana wishes to launch a region-wide tourism ambassador program to serve all partners across the region.

Objective 1:

Secure an industry partner with whom to develop a regional tourism ambassador program.

Objective 2:

Utilize staff, potentially new personnel, to develop and execute the program across the region.

Metrics:

If we secure a partner, develop the program and execute it, sharing with at least 3 communities/10 tourism partners in FY25, we will consider this objective a success.

To implement this goal, Visit Southeast Montana Board has approved adding staff to execute the Tourism Ambassador program (utilizing an industry partner) and for additional marketing support. This is a big step that resulted from multiple Board discussions, the Board Retreat and the Resiliency Plan, along with shifting funds from cooperative marketing grants and VIC grants to better serve all communities across the region rather than the three VIC gateways. We anticipate this may take longer than a year to implement and that the content created will be useful--and shared with -- all communities and State Tourism.



Visit Southeast Montana

STRATEGIC GOAL #3

In late FY24, *southeastmontana.com* will undergo a renovation. In FY25, we will continue to add content to the website while advancing advertising to work more around “Plan Your Trip” and sequential steps, including increased digital re-targeting efforts.

Objective 1:

Identify content areas on *southeastmontana.com* that need to be enhanced; craft more content.

Objective 2:

Maximize paid media budget to target and re-target this audience to drive more traffic to *southeastmontana.com* with the goal to increase traffic and time-on-site.

Metrics:

Increasing traffic to “Plan Your Trip” section of website by 15% and time-on-site by 10% from FY24 to FY25 will be defined as success for this method.

As a foundational marketing tool, southeastmontana.com continues to evolve and will incorporate more video (as this is what viewers want) and new content. We will also explore options for a comprehensive dashboard to encompass more reporting metrics. In FY24 to date, we have increased page visitors by 90% from 2023 and page views by 135%, topping 1M in March. We will continue this forward progress.



STRATEGIC GOAL #4

Continue to build content and marketing by integrating our Destination Development Projects: Montana Dinosaur Trail; Southeast Montana Burger Trail; Montana's Trail to the Stars and Montana's Great Wide Open: Badlands to Breaks to Beartooths.

Objective 1:

Dedicate portion of paid media budget to each DD project.

Objective 2:

Include DD projects on fairs, blogs, content gathering and all other marketing methods.

Objective 3:

Invite appropriate Dept. of Commerce personnel and/or AOR content personnel to experience the Southeast Montana region to personally experience DD products.

Metrics:

Issuing an invitation to DOC and increasing traffic to each DD website/landing page by 10% from FY24 to FY25 will be considered a success.

Destination Development has been vital to the region's growth. Most surprising has been the positive reception of the Southeast Montana Burger Trail, not just for visitors but for regional and community pride. While the region has much space in which to grow product, creative products like this help move the dial and require continued support both from the region and the state level.



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VISIT SOUTHEAST MONTANA FY 25 PROPOSED MARKETING BUDGET JULY 1, 2024 – JUNE 30, 2025

The Marketing plan will operate within the following budget.

REVENUE	
Estimated Bed Tax Revenue	\$777,378
Predicted Rollover	\$180,000
Total Revenue	\$957,378
EXPENSES	
ADMINISTRATION	\$155,476
JOINT VENTURES	
BIL direct CA flight marketing	\$25,000
State JVs	\$20,000
Other JVs	\$5,000
Total Joint Ventures	\$50,000
OPPORTUNITY MARKETING	\$25,000
MARKETING PERSONNEL	\$175,000
AGENCY SERVICES	\$110,000
MARKETING RESOURCES	\$7,000
PAID MEDIA	
Multimedia Advertising	\$161,702
Broadcast/LBBNM Ad Support	\$7,500
Electronic Advertising (e-news)	\$5,000
Print products, brochures, etc.	\$7,500
Digital Assets	\$30,000
Sweepstakes/Promotional Items	\$5,000
Total Paid Media	\$216,702
EARNED MEDIA/TOURISM SALES	
Earned Media - Staff	\$5,000
Earned Media - Windfall	\$10,000
Fam Tours	\$10,000
Crisis Communications	\$100
Total Earned Media/ Tourism Sales	\$25,100
WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT	
Retainer	\$30,000
Website Content Creation	\$7,500
Website renovation	\$10,000
Total Website Development	\$47,500
EDUCATION/OUTREACH	
Workshop/Ed Programs	\$10,000
Professional Training	\$8,000
TAC Meetings/Gov Conf	\$5,000
Voices of MT Tourism	\$2,000
Board Meetings	\$7,500
Total Education/Outreach	\$32,500
TRAVEL/TRADE SHOWS	
RMI	\$3,000
Optional Show	\$100
Total Travel/Trade shows	\$3,100
RESEARCH	
Research	\$13,500
PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT	
Asset & Content Collection	\$5,000
Destination Development	\$5,000
Total Product Development	\$10,000
VISITOR SERVICES	
Fulfillment by Contractor	\$31,000
Call Center	\$25,000
Postage	\$5,500
Tourism Ambassador Program	\$25,000
Total Visitor Services	\$86,500
Total FY25 Marketing Budget	\$957,378

APPENDIX

SUMMARY FROM VISIT SOUTHEAST MONTANA'S FY24 CONVERSION STUDY
COMPLETED IN CONJUNCTION WITH WINDFALL

SOUTHEAST MONTANA CONVERSION STUDY SUMMARY

10 KEY TAKEAWAYS

(1) Visitation among previous inquiry profiles connected for the FY24 conversion study showed 3.9% growth over the previous year. It also demonstrated 18% growth over other regions conversion data captured during the same period.

- **SEMT FY24 65.9%**
- **SEMT FY23 62%**
- **OTHER REGIONS FY24 47%**

(2) The FY24 conversion study showed more immediate travel by the survey group but also growth in diversity of travel season with 58.5% of those surveyed providing a travel season, stating a month that fell outside of the traditional July/August peak season. September showed expanded popularity.

NON-PEAK SEASON FOCUS

- **SEMT FY24 58.5%**
- **SEMT FY23 41.5%**
- **OTHER REGIONS FY24 51%**

(3) The FY24 conversion study showed the successful outcome of having visitors spend more time in the region during their visit. This is an important strategic goal of the call center, visitor guide, website and social media channels.

SPENT MORE THAN ONE DAY IN REGION:

- **FY24 66.5%**
- **FY23 64.7%**

HAD A SOUTHEAST MONTANA BASE LOCATION DURING VACATION IN MONTANA:

- **FY24 45.5%**
- **FY23 37.4%**

(4) Southeast Montana's already high visitor satisfaction numbers were even better this time around and outpaced their in-state competitors.

DID YOU FEEL WELCOME?:

- **FY 24 98% YES**
- **FY23 96% YES**
- **OTHER REGIONS FY23 90%**
- **OTHER REGIONS FY24 89%**

(5) What were the primary sources visitors used when planning and visiting Southeast Montana?

FY24

- **TRAVEL GUIDE 37.3%**
- **WEBSITE 18.3%**
- **SOCIAL MEDIA 1.3%**

FY23

- **TRAVEL GUIDE 41.3%**
- **WEBSITE 14.7%**
- **SOCIAL MEDIA 3.3%**

(6) What were the popular activities for this group of visitors?

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. HIKING 51% | 6. STARGAZING 18% | 10. BREWERIES/DISTILLERIES 7% |
| 2. HISTORICAL SITES 44% | 7. WATER ACTIVITIES 10% | 11. GOLFING 7% |
| 3. WILDLIFE WATCHING 42% | 8. DINOS 10% | 12. BIRDING 7% |
| 4. CAMPING 22% | 9. HUNTING 9% | 13. BURGER TRAIL 6% |
| 5. FISHING 21% | | |

(7) Where did this group of inquiries reside?

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. TEXAS 8% | 6. ILLINOIS 5.2% |
| 2. MINNESOTA 7% | 7. FLORIDA 4.3% |
| 3. CALIFORNIA 6.5% | 8. IOWA 3.9% |
| 4. WISCONSIN 6% | 9. OREGON 3.4% |
| 5. WASHINGTON 5.6% | 10. PENNSYLVANIA 3.4% |

(8) If they did not make the trip after contacting SEMT, why?

1. **DESTINATION AND INTEREST POINTS WERE JUST TOO FAR AWAY 54%**
2. **COST OF TRAVEL 31%**
3. **LACK OF DESIRABLE LODGING 12%**

(9) What are they looking for in future vacation plans?

1. **NATURAL BEAUTY 82%**
 2. **AFFORDABILITY 44%**
 3. **OUTDOOR RECREATION OPTIONS 39%**
 4. **DRIVABLE DISTANCE 29%**
 5. **LESS PEOPLE 25%**
- *DESIRABLE CULTURAL EXPERIENCES 16%*

(10) Where did visitors go if they did not visit Southeast Montana?

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. OTHER PLACES IN MONTANA (EXCLUDING GLACIER AND YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARKS) | 6. ALASKA |
| 2. YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK | 7. COLORADO |
| 3. WYOMING | 8. HAWAII |
| 4. GLACIER NATIONAL PARK | 9. NORTH DAKOTA |
| 5. SOUTH DAKOTA | 10. SMOKY MOUNTAINS |

**INTERNATIONAL SPOTS SHOWED UP COMPARED TO ZERO IN THE PREVIOUS SURVEY.*



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