



Grant Details

118486 - FY23 DMO Plan

122514 - Miles City DMO Marketing Plan FY2023

DOC Office of Tourism

Grant Title: Miles City DMO Marketing Plan FY2023
Grant Number: 23-51-053
Grant Status: Underway
Comments:
Applicant Organization: Miles City Area Chamber of Commerce
Grantee Contact: John Laney
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Contract Sent	Contract Received	Contract Executed
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Grant Administrator: Barb Sanem
Contract Number: 23-51-053
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Contract Dates

Contract Sent Contract Received Contract Executed Contract Legal

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Project Start Project End

Comments
Amendment Comments

DMO Plan Narrative

1. Describe Your Destination

Describe your destination (who you are, who you wish to attract and why they would come) addressing your strengths, opportunities, and potential challenges.

Miles City is the "Old West". A charming small town that is located at the confluence of the Tongue and Yellowstone river, Miles City is rich in history. It has been a resting place for the likes Clark, General George Armstrong Custer, and Teddy Roosevelt, and was the birthplace of the Montana Stockgrowers Association in 1884. So much of our history still exists. Historic hotels and bars are still open for business for the true old west experience, making Miles City a great place to visit.

Miles City is the largest city east of Billings but with a population of less than 10,000 people we still offer that small town charm. We have a unique landscape for visitors, offering everything from rolling hills to the rough cuts of the Badlands. Farmland and cattle ranches along your drive are an advertisement for what Miles City is like.

Miles City has so many strengths. The beauty of the surrounding landscape, as you get closer to town, is a theatre of the mind. You can visualize what life would have been like, for the pioneers, as you gaze at the vastness of the land. Seeing the large herds of cattle, or the sprawling grain fields, assure you that you are not in the city anymore.

Herds of Antelope grazing in the cut fields and deer along the roadside make the hunter's hearts beat a little faster, just thinking of coming to the area to bag that big buck, a corn field littered with geese, ducks flying overhead, or grouse nestled on a sidehill call to the avid bird hunter. The area around Miles City is a mecca for hunting, whether with a bow, a gun, or a camera.

Once in Miles City, your life begins to change. Relaxation and a slower pace of life begin to take over. You are still in the old west but now it has a more of a modern flair, with all of the amenities of a big town but on a smaller scale. You will see Old West bars next to upscale dining facilities and lovely vintage diners next to a fast food chain. The difference is the people. Everyone is willing to share a story, to make a new friend, to tell the family history. Most of the population of Miles City are self-proclaimed trip advisors. They will always recommend the history that is the Range Riders Museum, the culture of the Waterworks Art Museum, and of course they will invite you to the World Famous Miles City Bucking Horse Sale. The third full weekend of May our town doubles in size, as visitors from all 50 states and numerous foreign countries come for one of the greatest old west rodeos in the world. When you say the name of Miles City to anyone, the next thing you hear is, "That's where the Bucking Horse Sale is, right?"

Miles City is located on I-94, as well as the intersection of HWY59 North and South, making it a great resting stop for travelers going to the National Parks from the east. The driving tourists are one of our many strengths, but it also points out one of our biggest issues. Miles City currently has no commercial air service, in or out of town. We have been working on this for some time now and we may have a light at the end of the tunnel, currently there is a flight school in operation and the local Economic Development Council is doing cost studies on the feasibility of a commercial air service to a more major hub. One other huge problem that we are currently facing is the ongoing drought that we are experiencing. We have sited hunting as an emerging market and I still believe it is but last year all of our block management ranches closed to hunting due to fire danger. It is also having a dramatic effect on the local economy.

Miles City will always be a charming small town because that is who we are. As good stewards of the land we will always maintain and share the beauty of the land around us. Whether it be the rolling hills, the rough Badlands, or the red hues

of the scorio bluffs, we will work to keep public access. You can rest assured, when your day is done we will have a great experience waiting for you when you get back to town.

2. Align with Montana Brand

Briefly describe how your destination aligns with the Montana Brand.

The landscape of Miles City and Eastern Montana is as unique to Montana as it is to any other place in the lower 48. The terrain of the Badlands offers a spectacle of life in a tougher time. The rock bridge of the Calypso Trail speaks to the pioneer spirit and necessity to create travel paths to a better life. The vast flatland and rolling hills gave hope to the visitors to the "Old West" searching for a new start. All of this is on display every day for the modern day visitor looking to chronicle life in a early times.

Miles City is a vibrant and charming small town that serves as a gateway to our natural wonders. In fact Miles City is located in the middle of natural wonders as mentioned above. In less than a 10 minute drive you can find yourself able to look as far as the eye can see and not see any sign of humanity. The peace that you get from this experience is breathtaking. Sit down and let the quite take your mind to places you have never experienced.

Now it's time to get up and come back to town. Don't worry your spot will be there tomorrow, and the next day, but it's time for a locally brewed beer and a chance to make new friends before you head to one of the local resturants that has that steak you have been waiting for since breakfast. We sell a way of life not just a place to experience life in Miles City.

3. What is the strategic role of your DMO?

Select all that apply: Destination Marketing, Destination Management, Destination Stewardship, Destination Development).

Destination Marketing

Based on the strategic role you serve, provide the following information.

3a. Define your audience(s) (demographic, geographic, and psycho-graphic).

Our audience based on research from Datafy, Visa Destination, Website annalitics, etc appear to fit in the following catagories:

Age - 45 to 64 at 34.3%, 25 to 44 at 27.9%

Income - Under 50K 29.8%, 50K to 150K 20.0%

Education - High School/No Degree 59%

Household - 1-2 51%, 3-5 42%

Using the same research sources our geographic groups have changed since last year. We see a surge from Texas that we are sure is based entirely on the wind farm construction happening north of town. Texas was not even mentioned last year and is currently fifth in states visiting. Also Wisconsin was 8th last year and is 6th this year. Montana obviously remains 1st followed by North Dakota, Minnesota, and Washington.

Miles City tracks Psychographic markets using a combination of Demographics and Marketing Analysis.

The differences in age demographic is very small between ages 44 to 64 with the income pattern being similar from under 50K to 150K. Education is very close in HS and Bachelors but some college and grad/4yr lag far behind. Household size is similar in the 1-2 and 3-5 categories. DataFly, as well as Visa Destination numbers for each individual quarter leads us to believe that quarter 1 is primarily hockey and basketball tournaments driven as Miles City hosts a tourney almost weekly with some age group of hockey and several high school basketball and wrestling tournaments. As in the past, data shows an increase in education and family size during this time. Quarter 2 is pushed by the World famous Miles City Bucking Horse Sale as well as live horse racing, but also by what appears to be early travel to the National Parks. This seems to move the age and income up probably because these people don't represent school age childrens parents. Quarter 3 are the summer months when we have travelers more so than visitors, based on our research. Quarter 4 is the real picture that drives the needle on showing our baseline numbers. Hunting season, what we had of it, brings the age group more into line with our baseline numbers. It also moves the mark on income, education and household size.

We remain cautious because we see exceledated numbers that may track back to when and if everyone is willing to call the pandemic over as well as the effects of the drought. As much as we prayed for a vaccine, we pray for rain.

3b. What research supports your DMO strategy?

To briefly describe the reasoning for declaring ourselves as a destination marketing organization is because that is the avenue chosen for the Miles City CVB (DMO). The Miles City Area Chamber of Commerce directs the CVB marketing budget and plan, we utilize funds from our TBID for a more management approach because of the diverse ways we can utilize funds. We are also the Economic Development Council so the development piece is dealt with that budget and stewardship is the goal of all of the entities we manage. We use Datafy as well as Visa Destination as our major sources along with ITRR and MOT. Another thing that we have privy to is news of action in town before it is public so we can direct marketing accordingly. As displayed in my budget I have allicated \$6,000.00 in joint venture which is my share of the cost of Visa Destination. I was also able to stall my billing on Datafy so that the data will cover allof FY23.

3c. What are your emerging markets?

For our emerging markets we most retreat a bit. We have started and stopped marketing hunting for a couple years now. We still fell it is an emerging market but the market is currently driven by rain and we have no control over that. We need rain for ranchers to feel comfortable in opening their ranches to hunting. We see a huge new market that we have moved funds to attack. Miles City was awarded extra days of live horse racing this spring that we hope will bring a early B.H.S. crowd. We see the Canadian market coming down if they can because they always have a presence at live racing.

Another thing we are doing is a local push to all the new residents we got during Covid to invite your friends to your new town. We have had alot of people coming into the office looking for brochures to send to their friends which has us excited.

With the new Custer County Event Center we have the ability to attract convention and larger group events. We will grow by use of this facility. We have already hosted the state FFA Convention bringing about 700 people to town for three days.

It also will be exciting to see the growth generated by the Eastern Montana Initiative as well as the Lower Yellowstone River project.

4. Define and describe your overall goals.

A goal is an idea of the future or desired result that a person or group of people envisions, plans and commits to achieve.

Our ultimate goal is to get a handle on the new "Normal". So many things that we veiwed as constant aren't anymore. Between Covid and a multi-year drought we are finding it very hard to plan for the future. Using the "Pioneer spirit that has such strong roots here we are going to plan on a strong hunting season, a mild winter, a lucious spring, and a green summer. All major events are being planned as usual, we have seen reason to beleive we have great things in our future.

Summer music on the street, Bucking Horse Sale with two extra weeks of live horse racing, ample game counts, a tremendous hockey program bringing visitors every weekend in the winter all point to great numbers. Community buy in that shows they understand we share successes as well as failures has brought the community on board with what we are trying to accomplish. We will work together to make this year positive for all of us.

4a. Describe proposed tactics and projects as related to overall goals and controlled by the organization in its financial statements.

As mentioned before in the DMO section we will continue to hold our focus on visitor attraction. We will market to the groups according to our research and what knowledge we have acquired over the years. All of the branches of our DMO have a set job our objective, all designed to attract visitors to Milles City. We have coined the phrase "Discover Miles City for a day, a week, or a lifetime." That is how we will approach everything we do. We will us this budget to bring people to Miles City with a goal of overnight stays. The others are designed to enhance longer stays that bolster the economy and create other offerings for future visitors. Four seperate budgets all aimed at the same target audience.

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Objectives/Metrics/Evaluation

Objectives	Measurable Metrics for Success	Report the Metric Achieved	Evaluation of Measurable Metrics for Success
<p>Our objectives are to increase Fall (Oct.,Nov.,Dec.)by concentrating on Hunting season. This will be handled with print advertising, radio, and T.V. with a reach into Minnesota, Wyoming, and the Dakota's. Fall has been very problematic for us due to the drought situation. We rely on block management for successful hunting numbers and in the last two years most , if not all block management was closed due to the fire conditions. Based on outfitters tying up private land from the weekend hunter that leaves nowhere to hunt.</p>	<p>We are seeing good moisture in early spring along with the revitalization of natural grasses which leads us to be excited for a wet summer and fall leading to more hunting options. We feel that with more land open we can expect a 5% increase in revenue collections for the fall quarter over last fiscal year. We can also revue our TBID collections to monitor the strongest reporting months.</p> <p>These successes could be altered by the lack of moisture throughout the summer and a marketing adjustment could be made if necessary.</p>	<p>Both TBID and Bed Tax Collections we saw an increase closer to 7% over our expected increase of 5%.</p>	<p>Our 7% increase can be attributed to better access to block management availability and a bigger deer population than last year. We also saw an unexpectedly high late travel season from the summer travel we have seen in past years. We will continue to market hunting in the fall as well as looking at late National Park visitation trends.</p>
<p>With a more targeted winter budget it will make available extra funds for spring in Miles City. Spring Quarter (Apr.,May,June) in Miles City is Bucking Horse Sale time. The sale actually has increased to almost a full month with the addition of extra weeks of live horse racing. We also have numerous events during this time that we</p>	<p>With the expanded BHS weekends, the college sport season, along with other events we expect to see increases of 5% from last year based on Dept. of Revenue numbers. This figure may be very conservative because we</p>	<p>Both datafy and Visa showed a very slight increase of just over our projected 5%.</p>	<p>Weather once again played in our favor with all the Mon-Dak Baseball and Softbal games played in Miles City meaning teams here every weekend. Bucking Horse sale was very similar in size from the year before. With</p>

market that revolve around sports such as college baseball, softball, and rodeo. These sports generate great visitor bases that come from North Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, and of course Montana.	haven't seen this years numbers yet. The early data from Datafy and Visa Destination show that we should see increases based on the FY21 numbers.		the addition of new seating and more live horse racing dates this will still prove to be a marketing piece we will continue to do.
Summer (June, July, August) we plan a very aggressive print campaign along the I 94 Corridor. Showing our in depth event schedule will hopefully pull visitors off the Interstate. We don't know the extent of the Yellowstone Project yet so it is hard to project a marketing plan with that but we will be very active with that as it starts to materialize.	Summer will be a bit of a mystery as we watch gas prices, the Yellowstone River Project, and the fire season but we look to see at least an increase in the 5% range based on Dept. of Revenue figures compared to last year. The saving grace to this is we will have a pretty good idea of the variables mentioned by spring and can react accordingly up or down.	Bed Tax Collections and TBID statistics show that summer was strong with a higher than expected 8% increase.	The strength of summer can be attributed to several issues. The perception of overcrowding in the parks, more marketing being done for eastern Montana, and what we saw as stay-cations moved the needle. We will continue to market our incredible offerings hoping to repeat these numbers in the future.
Winter (Jan., Feb., March) is hockey in Miles City. We market to Montana, North Dakota, Wyoming, and Idaho that bring visitors every year for Tournaments. We increase visitors every year based on events to go along with these teams being in Miles City. We send event guides to each cities representatives so they can plan thier time here. The TBID actively recruits events to also push the winter season such as high school basketball tournaments. We can plan our strategies for the quarter with the knowledge of our target markets for the quarter.	Winter was our worst quarter until we started sponsoring youtrh hockey events along with zero bidding basketball tournaments and now it ranks as one of our best performers. With the help of the TBID we hope to see an increase of 8% based on Dept. of Revenue stats for winter quarter over last years numbers. We can also monitor performance by Datafy and Visa Destination numbers.	It appeared from all our data that we fell short of our projection of 8%. At best we saw a 3% increase.	While any increase is good we fell short due to less Hockey tournaments and a bit nicer weather situation than usual. The TBID is committed to sponsoring more tournaments next hockey season so we will continue to market stronger and build our share with their help.

DMO Budget

Allowable Methods	Amount Budgeted	% of Budget Allocated	Amount Expended	% of Budget Expended
Administration	\$8,900.00	19.96	\$9,272.00	104.18

Cooperative Marketing	\$1,000.00	2.24	\$0.00	0
Education/Outreach	\$6,684.00	6.73	\$2,407.41	36.02
Joint Venture	\$6,000.00	13.46	\$6,000.00	100.0
Opportunity Marketing	\$0.00	3.78	\$0.00	0
Paid Media	\$28,000.00	44.86	\$28,271.19	100.97
Website Development (Online, Website, Mobile)	\$6,949.00	13.46	\$6,310.00	90.8
	\$57,533.00	104.49	\$52,260.60	

Narrative Evaluation

Fall Objectives:

Our 7% increase can be attributed to better access block management availability and a bigger deer population than last year. We also saw an unexpectedly high late travel season from the the summer travel we have seen in the pastyears. We will continue to market hunting in the fall as well as looking at late National Park visitation trends.

Spring Objectives:Weather once again played in our favor with all the Mon-Dak baseball and softball teams playing all their games in Miles City. This mean't we had all teams staying in Miles City to play all spring. Bucking Horse was very similar in size from the year before. With additional seating and more live horse racing dates this will still prove to be a marketing piece we will continue to do .

Summer Objectives:

The strength of summer canbe attributed to several issues. The perception of overcrowding in the National Parks, more marketing being done for Eastern Montana, and what we saw as stay-cations moved the needle. We will continue to market our incredible offerings hoping to repeat these number or increase them next year.

Winter Objectives:

While any increase is good we fell short due to less Hockey Tournaments and a bit nicer weather situation than last year. The TBID is committed to sponsoring more tournaments next hockey season so we will continue to market hockey making marketing even a stronger push to build our share with their help.

Reg/CVB Required Documents

Description	File Name	File Size
Required Documents	FY23 Certificate_Bylaws_Board Approval #1.pdf	1.4 MB

Required Documents

FY23 Certificate_Bylaws_Board
Approval #1.pdf

1.4 MB

