

Application Summary

Application: FY25 DMO Plan

Applicant:

Funding opportunity: FY25 DMO Plan

Application Responses

Organization Name: Miles City DMO

First Name: John

Last Name: Laney

Street Address 1: 511 Pleasant Street

Street Address 2:

City: Miles City

State: MT

Zip: 59301

Funding Opportunity: FY25 DMO Plan

Amount Requested: 48,296.00

General Description Information

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

1a. Destination:

Miles City is the "Old West". A charming town located at the confluence of the Tongue and Yellowstone rivers. Rich in history, Miles City was the resting place for such famous people as Lewis and Clark, General George Armstrong Custer, Teddy Roosevelt, as well as many Indian chiefs. It became the original home of the Montana Stockgrowers in 1884. It was also the home of Fort Keogh, a remount station for the U.S. Cavalry during the Indian wars. Fort Keogh at its peak grazed over 100,000 horses for the Cavalry.

Much of the structures from that period still exist on Historic Main Street housing bars, restaurants, retail stores and office buildings. Fort Keogh is still utilized as an experiment station for both State and Federal livestock and grassland research.

Miles City is the largest city east of Billings with a population of less than 10,000 people still offering the old west way of life mixed with a modern flair. An example of the diversity is The Range Riders Museum featuring offerings from the old west days to The Waterworks Art Museum and a mixed of Western and one contemporary/modern art.

The beauty of eastern Montana is very visible in Miles City and the surrounding area. With rolling hills, badlands, and fertile farmland it's easy to drift back to the pioneer days and lose yourself in the history that is Miles City. The land and waterways are a perfect area for hunters of all types. Deer, antelope, elk,

and other game animals are abundant in our area as well as geese, ducks, grouse and turkey for the bird hunters. The Yellowstone River is the only place in the world to find "Moss Agates" making the area a mecca for rockhounds as well. So whether you hunt with a gun, a shovel, or a camera we offer whatever you are after.

The World-Famous Miles City Bucking Horse Sale is best known event in Miles City featuring live horseracing and bucking horses by the hundreds. Known as the "Cowboy Mardi Gras" Miles City is the place to be on the third full weekend in May but remember we will welcome you the other 361 days a year.

1b. Strengths:

Miles City with its rich history offers the Old West to visitors along with a casual lifestyle is a welcome location to escape the busy city life. We are located along Interstate 94 as well as the Intersection of Montana 59 North and South making our ease of access a huge strength. Affordability is another strength, the cost of living in Miles City is much less than what the visitor will encounter the further west you go. Almost all visitors to Yellowstone and Glacier Parks from the east go by Mile City making it a perfect resting spot for your family vacations. Wildlife, the landscape, and the way of life lends itself to being a great stop and if we do our jobs right in welcoming our visitors, we will see them on their return home.

1c. Opportunities:

Weather is always either an opportunity or a challenge. It is difficult to say bad weather can be good but in the last two years Miles City has been the host for every Mon-Dak baseball game due to bad weather in North Dakota. That brought all eight teams to town 6 times. It was a big boost to the local economy as well as our bed tax collections. Moisture makes Miles City money, whether it be in agriculture or tourism. Winter roads, rain in the spring, summer, and fall dictate the hunting seasons. Fire is also unfortunately an opportunity for Miles City as we are the regional fire headquarters for the BLM. Eastern region fires bring hundreds of firefighters to Miles City filling motels and local restaurants. Gas prices making driving a better option than flying helps our visitor counts greatly as well as our motel rates are much less than further west making Miles City a much less expensive place to stop.

1d. Potential Challenges:

As stated above weather is either an opportunity or a challenge. If we continue in a drought like we have been we will see lower hunting numbers due to land closures. The deer population will remain low because moisture flushes the disease that the deer are dying from away. Icy roads making travel hazardous hurts our collections in the winter season. Besides weather Miles City struggles with the fact we have no commercial air service. Miles City was dropped from the essential air service program leaving us with no service out of Miles City. We have been trying to recruit a fixed wing operation since being dropped but

with no success. Rail service is in the discussion stages but it will be years before all parties agree on how best to start the southern Amtrak route.

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2. Briefly describe how your destination aligns with the Montana brand or describe the Brand strategy for your DMO.:

Miles City is the Montana Brand. Miles and miles of unspoiled nature surrounds us. Public land with easy access, easy river access to both the Yellowstone and Tongue Rivers. Take a short drive to the Terry badlands and the Calipso Trail for some of the most stunning views and be back to town for a fine dining experience. Miles City is a self-proclaimed vibrant and charming small town with locals that sell the western lifestyle that visitors are traveling to Montana to experience. We graciously take on the duties of giving our visitors the best Eastern Montana has to offer whether they want solitude or the local flair.

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Destination Marketing:

Destination Management:

Destination Stewardship:

Destination Development:

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

According to the research we do using Datafy, Visaview, and ITRR we see that our strengths are steady in age from 35 to 74 with an income level. from 40K to 150K with a much smaller group being from 40K to 50K. Education is from high school to 2-year college graduates. Household size is almost a mirror image between the 1-2 and the 3-5 categories. Income levels follow a pattern annually with the Spring and fall showing increases, driven by the higher income travelers being hunters and our visitors for the Bucking Horse Sale. Sporting events are a big driver for us, with Hockey and basketball tournaments helping our winter and spring numbers. We have been fortunate in the last two years with college baseball and softball. Miles City was the only location in the college region that didn't have snow so every team in the region played all their games in Miles City. As mentioned earlier, summer takes care of itself with travelers on the highways. We see strong numbers from the surrounding states such as Idaho, Wyoming, North and South Dakota, Washington, and Minnesota. Data shows a strong representation from Texas but that is deceiving due to the wind farm workers that have come to town for work.

3b. What research supports your DMO strategy? :

We use part of our marketing budget to purchase research that is applicable to just Miles City. We do a

joint venture with the Department to purchase Visaview. We also purchase Datafy to fill in the holes and we always rely on ITRR to give us valuable data. Along with that the Miles City Area Chamber of Commerce and the Miles City Economic Development Council office are operated out of this office giving us a comprehensive view of the goings on in Miles City. The inquiring's received in these two offices gives us a firsthand look on target audiences based on the search locations we see on a daily basis. We also stay aware of bed tax collection numbers which this year showed double digit increases.

3c. What are your emerging markets?:

We have looked at hunters as our emerging market for a couple of years but dry weather and disease in the deer population has changed our course of action. Until moisture makes farmers and ranchers more willing to open their land to hunting and the deer population comes back, we have started looking into other avenues. A new hunter has emerged, the rock hunters as mentioned above. Moss Agate hunting is becoming a big thing that we are seeing, and it is proving to have value to our economy and overnight stays. We are seeing more value minded travelers that are after a slower, less expensive visit. Data shows these visitors stay longer but spend less in the retail outlets. Walking trails far outperform retail stores, but mom and pop cafes and steakhouses are favored to fast food. These visitors are right up our alley so we can market to them with lifestyle versus amenities.

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

We have had great success with event marketing allowing us to budget our funds to support the projected visitor impact. The use and need for paid media reflect that strategy. We have a limited budget so we can't afford to make mistakes, so we budget for research annually to insure we are hitting our target market but still having funds to hit the emerging markets also. We also have knowledge of outside funding because we manage the local TBID as well as the Economic Development Funds, so it is easy to put together a consolidated attack on a limited budget. All of our lure pieces are a result of this three-tiered concept and they have a proven track record.

5. Define and describe your overall objectives. Objectives are formed from your goals. They are logical, attainable steps to achieve the goals and are able to be measured.:

Objectives/Metrics/Evaluation:

OBJECTIVES	MEASURABLE METRICS FOR SUCCESS	REPORT THE METRIC ACHIEVED	EVALUATION OF SUCCESSFUL METRICS
We are working with organizations to assist with marketing of future winter events such as increasing the number of sports tournaments. we will monitor gate numbers as	Increase winter quarter overnight stays by 5% from FY24 bed tax numbers of 12% by creating and/or marketing more sports tournaments (hockey, basketball) outside those awarded by the MHSA.		

well as hotel stays and TBID numbers to assure we can monitor each events success to assure we are meeting our goal of a 5% increase.			
Maintain Summer numbers.	We are consistently showing increases in our summer numbers for bed tax collections. Our 24 numbers showed 12% increase for the year. We need to stay at this level or at least target a modest increase but without a room rate increase. We want to that we are sustaining this growth we see. Again, this will be evident by bed tax collections, data research, and TBID numbers.		
By working with local business, we are planning educational training to push visitor satisfaction and in turn lengthen stays. Social media will give us satisfaction results while purchased data will give us a visual of the success of this plan. We have Datafy and Visaview to show length of stay numbers.	Increase length of stay numbers. We are currently at 1.2 days as length of stay and we would like to increase that number to at least 1.5.		

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Budget Form: FY25 DMO Budget Form 2 (1).xlsx

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DMO Budget:
DMO

Allowable Method	Amount Budgeted	% Budgeted	Amend +/-	Updated Budget	% Budgeted
Administration	\$9,659.00	20.00%	\$0.00	\$9,659.00	20.00%
Cooperative Marketing	\$1,000.00	2.07%	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	2.07%
Education/Outreach	\$3,000.00	6.21%	\$0.00	\$3,000.00	6.21%
Joint Ventures	\$1,000.00	2.07%	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	2.07%
Opportunity Marketing	\$3,637.00	7.53%	\$0.00	\$3,637.00	7.53%
Paid Media	\$25,000.00	51.76%	\$0.00	\$25,000.00	51.76%
Website Development (Online, Website, Mobile)	\$5,000.00	10.35%	\$0.00	\$5,000.00	10.35%
	\$0.00	0.00%	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
	\$0.00	0.00%	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
	\$0.00	0.00%	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%

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Narrative Evaluation:

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