

Application Summary

Application: FY25 DMO Plan

Applicant:

Funding opportunity: FY25 DMO Plan

Application Responses

Organization Name: Sidney Area Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture

First Name: Kali

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Street Address 2:

City: Sidney

State: MT

Zip: 59270

Funding Opportunity: FY25 DMO Plan

Amount Requested: 18332.00

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:

Welcome to Sidney, Montana, an authentically unspoiled and captivating Eastern Montana community set against a backdrop of rugged badlands and the fertile valley of the lower Yellowstone River. Sidney and the surrounding area is rich in history, adventure, and agriculture. Nicknamed the Sunrise City, spectacular sunrises abound while at night the big skies sparkle with the stars of distant galaxies leaving visitors with a breathtaking experience.

Acre for acre, there are few places in the nation that can boast the abundance of wildlife found in the Sidney area. The number of wild species that thrive in the area is as varied as the diverse types of terrain they inhabit. Prevalent along the Yellowstone and Missouri River bottoms are the white-tailed deer, whose numbers will astound the visitor. Much harder to spot than the relatively tame whitetails, mule deer stick to the thick patches of brush in the coulees during the days, only emerging onto the open plains to feed in the early morning or hours before dark. Although not as numerous as during late 1800s and early 1900s, the sight of pronghorn, commonly called antelope feeding in the pastures alongside cattle is not rare. The bird watcher will no doubt be able to fill up his or her notebook during the summer months, with sightings ranging from Redwing Blackbirds to the rare Golden Bullfinch, Bald Eagle, and White Pelican.

After a day of exploring the unspoiled badlands, hunting for a trophy buck, or touring the bridges and museums of the area, Sidney new and brand name hotels have over 600 rooms to accommodate families,

couples, and solo travelers. Camping options for those seeking the comfort of their well-appointed RV or solace of a snug tent exist within 15 miles of Sidney. Local dining options invite travelers to enjoy locally crafted beer and food pairings from the brewery and public house to fresh sushi and mouth-watering steak. The genuine hospitality of Sidney welcomes all travelers.

1b. Strengths:

The Sidney Area has tourism strengths including a robust hospitality industry encompassing six corporate hotel chains and nearly 40 restaurant/bar establishments. The community boasts retail establishments in everything from outdoor recreation, boutiques, hobby shops and more.

Sidney has many assets in terms of facilities. Richland County Fairgrounds has two new Event Centers - each with a capacity of 700+. The Fairground also includes two arenas, a large fairway and several buildings with 300 capacity. The historical Yellowstone Mercantile Co. building is currently under renovation to become a venue space for events. The Sidney Public School system offers facility rental for events that aid the hospitality industry including large scale tournaments. Sidney is also home to the MonDak Heritage Center which serves as the local museum and venue space for concerts and weddings.

The Sidney-Richland County Airport offers an average of 5 flights a day to and from Billings which expands access to Sidney.

Sidney falls on the Lewis and Clark trail and holds claim to many historical assets including Fort Union, Fort Bufford, the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers, and a POW camp from World War II.

The region is renowned for the wildlife including whitetail deer, mule deer, paddlefish, and ring-necked pheasants.

1c. Opportunities:

Sidney has the opportunity to build on it's strengths and create a thriving tourism industry. The potential to increase access to public lands thereby leveraging the hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation strategies of the Sidney area would provide a large attraction.

There are specific historical locations that could be built upon and marketed for historical tourism. Those include the Lewis and Clark Trail, the Japanese POW camp, teepee rings and the Bakken oil formation.

Sidney has adequate facilities to recruit high volume events if there was an appropriate agency to manage them.

1d. Potential Challenges:

Sidney is remote and could be difficult to access. With air service only offered to and from Billings, and no rail or bus service is offered.

Funding is a very real barrier to a successful tourism industry. Sidney did submit an application for the Tourism Pilot Program but funding for tourism infrastructure is extremely limited and the cost of completing projects in the outdoor recreation realm is extremely expensive. Even simply marketing is a huge expense with little sustainability.

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

Sidney showcases the rugged badlands and the rolling plains of Eastern Montana. Our region is considered frontier and demonstrates the unspoiled nature as defined by the Montana brand.

The town of Sidney is a capsule of the "American dream" with 27 parks, a strong locally based economy and charming residents. Many of the residents hold decades of knowledge to the "hidden gems" of the area - the nature and the history you won't find on a sign.

Though the experiences could use developing, the opportunities for fishing, kayaking, hunting, hiking, arts and culture and business development are vast.

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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):

A) Hunters & Anglers: Heavily skewed male audience, typical income level of \$35,000+; census statistics suggest about 15% of the general US population age 16 and older fishes, while 10% hunt.

B) History & Culture Buffs: Adults 35+ who are traveling with or without children, with a household income of \$60,000+. These travelers are interested in a variety of history, arts and culture and are likely to visit a historical site during their vacation.

C) Traditional Family Travelers: Adults 35+ years of age, with or without children. They have a household income of

\$60,000+. These travelers participate in scenic driving, nature photography, camping/hiking, museums and wildlife viewing/bird watching and dinosaurs. They are interested in creating a safe and memorable experience together.

D) Mature Adult: 50+ years of age traveling as a couple with or without grandchildren. They have a household income of \$80,000+, retired with time to spend in Montana. Travel via motorcycle, car, or RV. According to a 2017 AARP 2017 Travel Study, “boomers” take an average of five trips per year for leisure, prefer to eat in local restaurants, and plan travel through major online sites such as Trip Advisor, Expedia, Yelp, and Google Maps. Boomers also prefer Summer and Spring travel over and Fall and Winter (AARP Travel Research: 2017 Travel trends).

E) Motorcyclists: Survey data from the Motorcycle Industry Council on motorcycle owner demographics for the 1985 to 2003 period reveals a shift towards older owners. The median age of owners increased from 27.1 years in 1985 to 41.0 years in 2003. From 1985 to 2003, the percentage of owners 40-49 years old increased from 13.2 to 27.9 percent, and the percentage of owners 50+ years old increased from 8.1 to 25.1 percent.

3b. What research supports your DMO strategy? :

The Sidney CVB will be starting at base level for tourism strategies. No matter what strategies we implement, we'll need asset mapping and content creation to further develop our tourist attractions.

The Sidney CVB utilizes data from the Institute for Tourism and Recreational Research to assess which tourism amenities are feasible to develop and/or market.

3c. What are your emerging markets?:

According to the 2024 Travel Trends report from Trip Advisor, historical and heritage touring in the US is up 98% in year over year growth based on bookings. Sidney is near two national historical sites, Ft. Union and Ft. Buford, and is located along the return route of Lewis and Clark’s Corps of Discovery. The MonDak Heritage Center, located in Sidney, has information to orient and educate a visitor.

Millennial travelers use social media as inspiration to plan their next vacation, research multiple website to find the best value, and book the travel on smart phones. Most travelers use search engines over other methods to identify and plan a trip. Sidney CVB used money in previous years to upgrade sidneymt.com to make it user friendly and optimized for mobile devices.

According to a 2018-2023 Institute for Tourism & Recreational Research survey data, the majority of travelers in Sidney visit for scenic driving. Travelers pass through Sidney on the way to North Dakota, Western Montana, Fort Peck Lake, Canada, or other destination. Geotargeting travelers stopping at a gas station or grocery store is an opportunity to promote the area and plan an overnight stay in Sidney. Sidney has affordable hotel rates and restaurants open in the evenings making it the perfect stopping point for those on the dinosaur trail, micro-brew trail or on their way to the state parks.

4. Describe proposed tactics and projects as related to overall goals and controlled by the

organization in its financial statements.:

Sidney CVB has an expected budget of \$18,332.00.

20% of the budget will be allocated toward the administration operations of the Sidney Visitor Center.

20% of the budget will be allocated toward Paid Media. Social media with an expanded trackable reach will be the main method of advertising.

30% of the budget will be allocated on website development (specifically cataloging public lands, how to access them and what features are on each piece of land).

30% of the budget will be allocated towards marketing personnel. This individual will be tasked with content creation and asset mapping.

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
Marketing Sidney, Montana through paid social media and advertising.	Sidney marketing campaigns will generate a baseline of measurable metrics for social media and paid advertising such as clicks, impressions, reach, fans and follows.	
Creating a centralized catalog of events and public spaces through website development will streamline visitor access to regional recreation resources. This central hub can serve as a one-stop destination for individuals seeking information on various activities and venues. By consolidating this information, visitors can easily plan their outings, explore different options, and make the most of their recreational experiences.	- Website will contain community calendar with up to 50 local events and up to 25 public spaces cataloged by May 25, 2025. - Tourism amenities and access to public spaces will be consolidated to an interactive platform within the Sidney website.	

