

# Application Summary

**Application:** FY26 DMO Plan - Beaverhead Chamber of Commerce

**Applicant:** BEAVERHEAD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**Funding opportunity:** FY26 DMO Plan

## Application Responses

**Organization Name:** Beaverhead Chamber of Commerce, Tourism & Development

**First Name:** Rebecca

**Last Name:** Jones

**Street Address 1:** 730 N. Montana St.

**Street Address 2:** Ste. #2

**City:** Dillon

**State:** Montana

**Zip:** 59725

**Funding Opportunity:** FY26 DMO Plan

**Amount Requested:** 39,839

**TAC Approved Budget:** 39,839

## 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 Dillon! This town epitomizes the essence of rodeo, ranching, fly-fishing, and hunting. Nestled in the expansive Beaverhead Valley, Dillon lies at the confluence of the Big Hole and Beaverhead Rivers. Here, you can embark on a journey to discover Montana's roots. Lose yourself in adventure and find yourself in tranquility!

Dillon is steeped in a rich tapestry of history, from the passage of Native Americans to the epic expedition of Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery, and from the fervor of gold rushers and vigilantes to the advent of railroads, farmers, and ranchers. The high-mountain desert landscape preserves this heritage, inviting you to delve into its well-preserved wonders.

The Beaverhead River, renowned as a Blue-Ribbon Trout Stream, beckons expert fly anglers. The Beaverhead County Museum in Dillon is dedicated to chronicling the local history. Nearby lies Bannack State Park, southwest of Dillon—a historic landmark marking Montana's initial significant gold strike on July 28, 1862, and the first territorial capitol of Montana. Over 50 edifices along Main Street evoke memories of Montana's early days.

Dillon serves as the gateway to Montana's largest national forest, spanning 3.35 million acres across eight counties in Southwest Montana. With its vast trail network, visitors can immerse themselves in the expansive landscapes and awe-inspiring vistas. Stand where Lewis & Clark once surveyed the valley—discovery awaits in every direction.

The rich tapestry of Southwest Montana's history unfurls in downtown Dillon, amidst unique boutiques and burgeoning enterprises. The town's commercial landscape mirrors its agricultural roots and the influence of the railroad era. Historic edifices stand as testaments to the pioneers who pursued their dreams with determination and resilience—and their legacy endures.

Explore the distinctive architecture that adorns downtown Dillon, from the Dillon Carnegie Library to the Beaverhead County Courthouse to Hotel Metlen. Embark on a historic walking tour and savor not only the architectural splendor but

also the stories etched within. Visit a myriad of stores from a custom saddle maker to a custom boot maker, from a Nationally renowned bookstore to a Nationally renowned outdoor clothing store. There are several clothing shops and floral shops! New to downtown Dillon is a new gun shop, board game shop and distillery!

Further marketing efforts will provide visitors with maps, phone numbers, websites, calendars, and other essential tools for an outstanding experience in Southwest Montana.

Additionally, the Chamber will allocate CVB-designated funds to offer an unparalleled visitor center experience for those travelers who prefer to stop at a physical location for information. New to the office are public restrooms and an Indoor Campsite! Also new is a 24-hour Information Kiosk, providing maps, brochures, and visitor information available 24/7/365! During office hours of Monday-Friday, 9-5pm, there will be trained, knowledgeable staff and printed materials to aid visitors navigating through Beaverhead County. Personal assistance will enhance the Montana experience for every visitor.

### **1b. Strengths:**

Dillon lies adjacent to Interstate-15 and serves as a junction for Montana Highways 91, 41, and 278. These highways connect the rural communities and visitor attractions of Beaverhead County.

Being over 5,500 sq. miles, Beaverhead County boasts the Beaverhead-Deer Lodge National Forest, along with the Beaverhead and Big Hole Rivers, providing unparalleled outdoor activities for visitors.

Dillon offers a comprehensive range of accommodations, dining options, and shopping venues, ensuring an enjoyable vacation for any budget. The town exudes Montana sophistication that visitors find both pleasantly surprising and welcoming.

It is a place where one can explore the rich history of Beaverhead County through the county museum, and a railroad depot.

The City of Dillon has earned national recognition as Tree City, USA by the Arbor Day Foundation. Jaycee's Park features a beautiful play scape, lawn, amphitheater, and Splash Pad!

Energized downtown with two fine art galleries, national renowned bookstore, Patagonia outlet, Great Harvest Corporation, Atomic 79 Boots & Western Gear, Rattlesnake Creek Alpacas Fine Goods, 406 Armory, The Tabletop Vault, and unique stores that can only be found in Dillon.

Annual signature events: Beaverhead Treasure Hunt (Memorial Day-Labor Day), Dillon Jaycee's Easter Egg Hunt, Dillon Jaycee's Summer Kickoff Demolition Derby and Concert in June, Bannack Days in July, Dillon Days in July, Montana's Biggest Weekend | Labor Day PRCA Rodeo (4-H Fair, Ranch Rodeo, PRCA Rodeo, Calcutta, concert and Labor Day Parade), Beaverhead Marathon, Dinner in the Park, Halloween Fall Fest, Parade of Lights/Festival of Trees in December are just a few events that take place throughout the year.

### **1c. Opportunities:**

Our website will provide essential information for visitors seeking a unique experience, which will inspire them to visit Dillon. Dillon's information will offer unique experiences found only in Beaverhead County.

The Beaverhead Treasure Hunt | Attention all treasure hunters: Visit Beaverhead County to discover a small, solid glass paperweight in one of the local businesses. The paperweight is yours to keep; simply snap a selfie of your paperweight in front of the business where you found it and email it to the Dillon Visitors Center to inform us of your find and be entered into a raffle drawing to win a prize.

From blue-ribbon trout fishing to mountain hiking, visitors will find Dillon a welcoming place to stay when they take exits 62 or 63 off I-15. Dillon serves as a gateway to Yellowstone, Pioneer Scenic Byway, Big Hole Battlefield, Red Rock National Wildlife Refuge, and Crystal Park. With its expansive open spaces and stunning scenery, Dillon offers visitors a distinctive place to stay while they explore during the day and unwind at night.

### **1d. Potential Challenges:**

The Clark Canyon Reservoir is nearly full, and the Beaverhead River looks good. If intense drought conditions return it

would be expected to affect our fishing seasons, particularly if the Fish and Wildlife Service decides to close our rivers in late July or August. Additionally, any drought may hinder our preparations for the winter travel season. Furthermore, the fire season is likely to have consequences during July, August, and September. Further challenges include the lack of economic development and the loss of a net 57 full-time jobs over the past 2 years. Dillon is also sitting at a 24% poverty rate. Dillon must continue to work to attract jobs in areas such as light manufacturing, warehouse or data centers in order to survive as housing prices and property taxes continue to rise.

In the Spring of 2025, our USDA/U.S. Forest Service Dillon Ranger District experienced a loss of 46 jobs. This is having an impact on housing, as we have seen an increase of inventory, which will help our housing issues, but at the cost of a loss of full time jobs. Attracting new businesses that will bring good-paying jobs is important now, more than ever.

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

Dillon exemplifies the essential Montana spirit of "That's How You Montana!"

Unspoiled natural splendor: Nestled in a valley, Dillon is surrounded by breathtaking landscapes, including two renowned trout streams. It serves as the gateway to Montana's largest national forests and three state parks, as well as one national park. Interstate 15 runs through the town, positioning Dillon as a hub for visitors looking to explore Beaverhead County.

A lively and quaint small town: Dillon's downtown area seamlessly blends historical allure with modern culture.

Daytime adventures and evening serenity: Whether you're fishing in blue-ribbon trout streams, searching for unique rocks, birdwatching, venturing through the Beaverhead-Deer Lodge National Forest, or uncovering the mysteries of ghost towns, Dillon offers a plethora of daytime activities. As night falls, enjoy delectable cuisine and unwind in comfortable accommodations in Dillon.

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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):**

### **Seasonal Traffic**

Travelers come through Montana from north to south using I-15. Arrivallist data shows that 46% of visitors enter I-15 from the south. It shows that our top three out of state visitors were Idaho, Utah, California. Dillon also enjoys visitors coming from Canada to points south in the fall and back to Canada in the spring. There is also a large number of rodeo travelers through Dillon, based on the number of overnight boarders at our fairgrounds. Dillon also has a new horse boarding facility for those wishing to exercise their horses while traveling. Visitors find fuel and refreshments from Dillon businesses, and it is a great way to provide opportunities to inspire spontaneous adventure or to inspire a future planned trip to the region. This market can be motivated by easy access to sites of interest and convenient travel route alternatives that allow for discovery of points of interest. This market will also be motivated by access to R.V. accommodation.

### **Leisure Travel**

The leisure travelers are active mature and young families that are looking for an affordable variety and a bit of culture and shopping with their outdoor centered vacation. Access to public lands is an incentive for fishing, hiking, camping, horseback riding, rock hounding, ATV/UTV rentals, and wildlife viewing. The leisure traveler will be connected via I-15 to Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks as well as State Parks. Dillon is an ideal place for visitors to stop, fuel, eat,

lodge and enjoy a couple of days exploring our trails, ghost towns, get weather updates, wildlife conditions, river conditions and trail openings.

### **History Buffs**

This market consists of individuals who enjoy learning about western history and culture. They are seeking to visit ghost towns, historical landmarks such as the Lewis & Clark Expedition, Big Hole Battlefield, Bannack State Park and mining sites throughout the region.

### **3b. What research supports your DMO strategy? :**

County Arrivalist Data shows 46% of visitors enter via I-15 South from Idaho into Montana.

Arrivalist Data 2024 Top 5 residency of origin for nonresident visitors to Dillon: Idaho, Utah, California, Washington, Oregon. ITRR research is specific to Dillon.

### **3c. What are your emerging markets?:**

Recreational hiking and biking:

The Beaverhead Trails Coalition continues to expand its trail network in Dillon, connecting numerous trails. This expansion has led to the addition of several running and hiking events during the summer season, attracting participants from beyond Montana. Dillon's Bike/Walk Park serves as a hub for long-distance cyclists seeking overnight accommodation. The park now features new pickleball courts and a dog park. As this market seeks dining options, snacks, and refreshments for their travels through Montana, it represents an emerging market with a growing influx of cyclists in our region. Several local businesses have hosted annual groups of cyclists in recent summers.

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

Our ongoing project, the Dillon Montana slick-stock brochure, remains a cornerstone of our regional airport distribution, boasting professional print quality. In our quest to elevate winter travel appeal, we're harnessing online and digital platforms across premier media entities, complemented by print ads in nationally recognized travel magazines. Our strategy also includes augmenting visibility among Yellowstone National Park enthusiasts through targeted online and digital promotions in collaboration with National Park Tours. The impending insights from an AI firm hold promise for unveiling novel marketing avenues. Moreover, the Beaverhead Treasure Hunt continues to be a beacon, enticing both locals and tourists to delve into the commercial gems of our county. The Regional Assistance Program (RAP) Grant that we received will assist for two years in the marketing of the Beaverhead Treasure Hunt. This marketing campaign will target a regional presence from Salt Lake City UT, Boise ID, Billings, Bozeman, Butte, and Spokane WA.

### **4b. How will the addition of LFST funds enhance your overall goals?:**

With the addition of the Lodging Facilities Sales Tax funding, our marketing campaigns will be enhanced, with additional paid media that we will be able to secure. The paid media could be in the form of an additional ad placed or additional OTT digital marketing.

### **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 |
|--|--|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| To enhance online/digital and print advertising aimed at boosting the number of winter visitors exclusively.   | We will measure our advertising reach by securing print ad placements with SWMT Regional Travel Guide/USA Today Winter Travel Guide/Cast/Stalk/Bozeman Outdoors. Additionally, we will place digital ads with National Parks Trips/Outdoor Magazine. We will obtain analytical data and benchmarking reports from SWMT Region, USA Today, National Parks Trips/Outdoor, and Cast/Stalk/Bozeman Outdoors to assess our marketing impact. Looking for an increase of 5% YoY.   |                            |                                  |
| To refresh and make our website more modern. To update our website with seasonal changes, upcoming events, new business listings, and to maintain its freshness.   | Utilize Wix.com Analytics/Google Analytics to monitor our website's traffic and contrast it with the traffic from the previous year. Aim to boost our website's traffic by 10%. In 2024, there were 438 new visitors or an 11% increase of new visitors to our site; these figures are expected to increase by 10% in 2026.  |                            |                                  |
| The Beaverhead Treasure Hunt project was initiated to foster community engagement and draw in tourists. Since 2021, we have been conducting this initiative using handcrafted glass paperweights. This year, we are excited to continue our collaboration with The University of Montana Western Glass Arts Program to create 250 unique small glass paperweights. These will be concealed within local businesses throughout Dillon and Beaverhead County, available for discovery by visitors/residents from | To successfully execute the Beaverhead Treasure Hunt initiative, we aim to conceal all 250 glass paperweights within local businesses by the July 4th weekend. This will allow visitors/residents to discover them. Our tracking of non-local visitors will be based on who responds with a picture of themselves and their paperweights for entry into a prize draw. Last year, this endeavor drew 20 visitors from outside the state to our region and involved over 145 locals, marking a twofold increase from the previous year. This year, our goal is to double the number of out-of-state visitors |                            |                                  |



|                          |                    |               |               |                    |          |
|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|----------|
| <b>TOTAL LFUT Budget</b> | <b>\$39,839.00</b> | <b>93.98%</b> | <b>\$0.00</b> | <b>\$39,839.00</b> | <b>9</b> |
|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|----------|

|   |                   |              |               |                   |  |
|---|-------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------|--|
| <b>Lodging Facility SALES Tax (LFST) Budget</b> |                   |              |               |                   |  |
| Administration                                  | \$510.00          | 1.20%        |               | \$510.00          |  |
| Paid Media                                      | \$2,040.00        | 4.81%        |               | \$2,040.00        |  |
|   |                   | 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            |  |
|   |                   | 0.00%        |               | \$0.00            |  |
| <b>TOTAL LFST Budget</b>                        | <b>\$2,550.00</b> | <b>6.02%</b> | <b>\$0.00</b> | <b>\$2,550.00</b> |  |

|                                     |                    |                |               |                    |           |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------|
| <b>TOTAL LFUT &amp; LFST BUDGET</b> | <b>\$42,389.00</b> | <b>100.00%</b> | <b>\$0.00</b> | <b>\$42,389.00</b> | <b>10</b> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------|

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| LFST Revenue Projection                     | 2,550.00         |
| LFUT Revenue Projection                     | 39,839.00        |
| Funds not spent during previous fiscal year | 0.00             |
| LFST Rollover Funds at Commerce             | 0.00             |
| LFUT Rollover Funds at Commerce             | 0.00             |
| Allocated Following Audit                   | 0.00             |
| <b>Budget total</b>                         | <b>42,389.00</b> |

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**The Narrative Evaluation report is used to a) provide a written evaluation of the Objectives and Metrics section and b) provide a written summary of how the LFST Funds were spent and the metric(s) achieved.:**

This Narrative Evaluation report will be completed upon completion of the fiscal year.