

Application Summary

Application: FY26 DMO Plan - Discover Anaconda

Applicant: Discover Anaconda

Funding opportunity: FY26 DMO Plan

Application Responses

Organization Name: Discover Anaconda

First Name: Celina

Last Name: Van Hyning

Street Address 1: 306 E Park Ave

Street Address 2:

City: Anaconda

State: MT

Zip: 59711

Funding Opportunity: FY26 DMO Plan

Amount Requested: 27,892

TAC Approved Budget: 27,892

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:

Anaconda is the best hidden gem in the Last Best Place. Nestled in the heart of Montana's rugged landscape, Anaconda offers a rich tapestry of history, outdoor adventure, and small-town charm. Once a booming copper smelting hub, this town has transformed into a vibrant destination for travelers seeking both cultural experiences and natural beauty, all while maintaining the historic integrity of the town.

Historic Landmarks and Cultural Attractions

Anaconda's storied past is evident in its well-preserved architecture and historical sites. The Washoe Theater, opened in 1936, stands as a testament to the town's opulent past. Designed in the Nuevo Deco style, it's renowned for its lavish interior adorned with copper ornaments and murals, reflecting the town's mining heritage.

Dominating the skyline is the Anaconda Smelter Stack, the tallest free-standing brick structure in the world, sitting at 585 feet. Completed in 1919, it serves as a poignant reminder of the town's industrial legacy. Visitors can learn about its history at the nearby viewing site, which features interpretive displays. They can also drive up to "The Stack" during Smelterman's Weekend, an annual event that celebrates Anaconda's history as a smelter city.

The Anaconda Commercial Historic District offers a glimpse into the town's architectural evolution, with buildings dating back to 1888. The district encompasses 31 acres and contains 63 contributing buildings. Notable structures include the Deer Lodge County Courthouse and the Copper Village Museum and Arts Center. We are also home to the U.S. Post Office and the Hearst Free Library, both listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Outdoor Adventures and Natural Beauty

Golf enthusiasts can tee off at the Old Works Golf Course, a Jack Nicklaus-designed course built on the site of the town's first copper smelter. The course integrates remnants of its industrial past, including black slag bunkers, providing a unique golfing experience.

Anaconda is also home to the longest zip lining course in the state. Montana Zipline Adventures offers an exhilarating way for visitors to experience the stunning natural beauty of the Rocky Mountains. Located just outside Anaconda, this family-friendly attraction features thrilling zipline courses that soar above forests and rivers, making it a must-do for adventure seekers and nature lovers alike.

In town, Washoe Park offers family-friendly amenities like a splash pad, swimming pool and fish hatchery. The park's trails connect to the Upper Works Trail, which provides scenic views and historical insights into the area's smelting history

Dining and Local Flavor

Anaconda's downtown is filled with eateries, boutiques and cultural spots. Smelter City Brewing, housed in a historic building, serves craft beers like the town-favorite Anaconda Standard. Not far from the brewery are culinary delights such as Donovan's, Firefly Cafe, The Bighorn Wine Bar and Gallicano's Pizzeria.

For those interested in art, the Stoplight Art Gallery showcases works from local artists, reflecting the community's creative spirit.

Gateway to Montana's Wonders

Strategically located, Anaconda serves as a midpoint between Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks. The Pintler Veterans Memorial Scenic Highway connects Anaconda to Philipsburg, offering breathtaking views of the Anaconda Pintler Mountains and access to outdoor activities like skiing at Discovery Ski Area.

Nestled amidst rugged mountain landscapes, Anaconda offers access to the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, Georgetown Lake's shimmering waters and the world-class fly fishing of the Big Hole River. Nearby, explore Lost Creek State Park's dramatic cliffs, the serene Warm Springs Wildlife Management Area and an extensive network of hiking and biking trails that showcase Montana's untamed beauty.

Whether you're a history buff, nature lover or adventure seeker, Anaconda offers a rich and diverse experience that captures the essence of the American West.

1b. Strengths:

Location

Anaconda's location makes it an ideal base for exploring the broader Montana region. Situated less than two hours from major cities like Missoula, Bozeman, Helena, and Butte, Anaconda offers a peaceful retreat after a day of urban exploration. Additionally, it serves as a convenient midway point between Glacier National Park to the north and Yellowstone National Park to the south, making it a perfect stop for travelers exploring these iconic destinations. Visitors can enjoy the charm of a small, quiet town with comfortable accommodations, local dining options, and the opportunity to unwind amidst beautiful surroundings before continuing their Montana adventure.

Outdoor Recreation

Hiking and Wilderness Exploration: Surrounded by national forest land, Anaconda provides ample opportunities for hiking, skiing and snowmobiling. The nearby Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness and Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest offer extensive trails for outdoor enthusiasts. Anaconda was recognized as the #1 Community Gateway on the Continental Divide Trail.

Water Activities: Georgetown Lake, located just outside of Anaconda, is a popular spot for boating, fishing, camping and windsurfing. The lake is known for its excellent Kokanee salmon and rainbow trout fisheries.

Winter Recreation: Discovery Ski Area caters to both hardcore skiers and families, offering exhilarating vertical drops, cross country ski trails and relaxed easy chairs. Visitors looking for something a bit more tame can enjoy ice skating at The Common.

Historical and Cultural Attractions

Historic Downtown: Anaconda's downtown district features buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including the U.S. Post Office, Hearst Free Library, Deer-Lodge County Courthouse and the Washoe Theater.

Washoe Theater: This historic movie theater, opened in 1936, is the last theater constructed in the United States in the Nuevo Deco style. It is still operational and cherished by locals.

Anaconda Smoke Stack State Park: Home to one of the tallest brick structures in the world, the 585-foot smelter stack stands as a testament to Anaconda's copper-smelting history.

Unique Experiences

Old Works Golf Course: Designed by Jack Nicklaus, this golf course sits atop land reclaimed from Anaconda's copper-smelting era, featuring black sand traps made from smelting byproducts.

Fairmont Hot Springs Resort: A full-service resort offering naturally heated hot springs pools, a 350' enclosed water slide and an 18-hole golf course, providing relaxation and recreation for visitors.

Community and Events

Downtown Revitalization: Discover Anaconda was recognized by KPAX News for its work in revitalizing the downtown area in 2022. Our work led to a vibrant community with no vacant buildings and ongoing construction projects.

Seasonal Events: Anaconda hosts various events throughout the year, including the Winter Festival and Smeltermen's Weekend festivities, offering visitors a taste of local culture and festivities.

1c. Opportunities:

Shoulder season events

Anaconda offers year-round charm, and expanding shoulder season events is a fantastic opportunity to showcase the town's vibrant community and breathtaking surroundings. Imagine a Harvest Festival at The Commons, a stunning outdoor event space perfect for autumn celebrations. Over one festive weekend, local businesses could join forces to create unforgettable experiences, from bar crawls at cozy establishments to family-friendly activities like pumpkin carving and face painting. History enthusiasts can embark on "Historic Ghost Tours" or try their hand at "Historic Ghost Hunting" in collaboration with iconic sites like Gunslinger Gulch. These events promise to draw visitors, extend the tourism season, and highlight Anaconda's unique culture and history.

Boom in new businesses

Anaconda's downtown is witnessing a surge in new businesses that blend tradition with innovation. The town's revitalized Main Street boasts a diverse business district with coffee shops, boutiques, eateries and historic landmarks.

Winter tourism

In 2024, Anaconda-Deer Lodge County received a \$2.75 million Pilot Community Tourism grant from the Montana Department of Commerce to enhance winter tourism. Planned developments include a new hockey rink, a sled hill with a "Magic Carpet" lift and upgrades to existing facilities to ensure consistent winter recreation opportunities.

Anaconda transforms into a winter wonderland every year, offering a variety of activities.

Discovery Ski Area: Located less than 30 minutes from town, it caters to both novice and experienced skiers.

Cross-Country Skiing and Snowshoeing: Trails at Echo Lake and Mount Haggin provide scenic routes for these activities. Old Works Golf Course also offers cross country skiing.

Winter Festival: Held annually, the festival features ice carving competitions, ice skating at Kennedy Commons and various family-friendly events.

1d. Potential Challenges:

Anaconda faces several challenges in attracting and retaining tourists. One of the most significant hurdles is competition

from larger cities in the region, such as Missoula, Bozeman, and Butte, which offer a broader range of amenities, attractions, and accommodations. These nearby cities, located along major thoroughfares like I-90, often overshadow smaller destinations like Anaconda.

Another challenge for Anaconda is its location off the main interstate. While I-90 provides access to the town, it is not directly along the highway, which can make it less convenient for travelers seeking quick stops. This requires extra effort in promoting Anaconda as a worthwhile detour or a destination on its own, rather than a pit stop for those en route to other locations.

Keeping visitors engaged in Anaconda for several days rather than just a few hours is another obstacle. While the town has many unique attractions and access to outdoor activities, its offerings may not be sufficient to compete with the diversity of experiences available in larger or more centrally located cities. Developing itineraries, enhancing cultural and recreational attractions and hosting events that encourage longer stays could help address this issue.

Additionally, Anaconda may face challenges in modernizing its facilities and marketing efforts to appeal to a wider audience, including younger travelers and families. Investments in digital marketing, infrastructure upgrades and partnerships with local businesses and regional tourism boards could be critical to overcoming these challenges and positioning Anaconda as a unique and desirable destination.

As a small CVB with a small budget, access to timely tourism research is expensive, so current efforts by the Dept. of Commerce to make more real time research data available, to supplement ITRR data is greatly appreciated.

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

Anaconda embodies the essence of the Montana brand through its rich history, scenic beauty and rugged charm. The Montana Brand often evokes themes of outdoor adventure, natural beauty, independence and an appreciation for history and community.

Anaconda was established as a smelting town in the late 19th century, playing a key role in Montana's mining history. Its origins reflect the resourcefulness and hard-working spirit associated with the Montana brand. Landmarks like the Anaconda Smelter Stack stand as testaments to its industrial heritage.

Surrounded by the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness, the area offers one-of-a-kind landscapes and access to outdoor activities such as hiking, fishing and skiing. Nearby Georgetown Lake and the Discovery Ski Area attract adventurers year-round, aligning with Montana's image as a haven for nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts.

Like much of Montana, Anaconda fosters a tight-knit, welcoming community. Its small town charm resonates with visitors seeking an authentic, friendly environment. Local festivals, markets and events reflect the pride and creativity of its residents.

Despite economic shifts following the decline of the smelting industry, Anaconda has reinvented itself while preserving its identity. This resilience is a hallmark of the Montana spirit. Efforts to preserve Anaconda's history and integrate

sustainable tourism demonstrate respect for its heritage and environment, a key aspect of the modern Montana ethos.

In summary, Anaconda aligns with the Montana brand by blending its historical significance, outdoor opportunities and small-town charm with the rugged and resilient spirit that defines the state. It's a living example of how Montana's past and present collide to create a unique identity.

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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):

Demographically, the majority of our visitors are in the 55-64 age range. Most visitors are traveling solo (37%) or as a couple. 36% of our visitors reported income levels between \$100,000-\$150,000.

Geographically, visitors hail from a mix of domestic and international locations, including Washington (18%), Illinois (17%) and Florida (14%), with international travelers primarily coming from British Columbia, Canada (2%).

ITRR data continues to show the majority of Anaconda visitors engage in scenic driving, day hiking, wildlife watching, nature photography and historical site visits. Tourists continue to be attracted to the sites in Southwest Montana, including Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks.

3b. What research supports your DMO strategy? :

ITRR research highlights the substantial contribution tourism makes to the economy. Visitors spend the most money on food and drinks (38.1%), transportation (29.4%) and lodging (18.7%).

Visitor satisfaction scores reinforce the destination's appeal, with high ratings for wildlife viewing opportunities (91%), feelings of being welcomed (94%) and access to open spaces (92%). Key entry points, including major highways and nearby airports, underscore the importance of accessibility in driving visitation to Anaconda and surrounding areas.

3c. What are your emerging markets?:

Emerging markets for Anaconda include a growing interest from far away U.S. states such as Illinois and Florida, along with minimal international visitation from Canadian provinces like Alberta and British Columbia. Younger demographics are also becoming more prominent, participating in outdoor activities like mountain biking, rock climbing and stargazing, which align with the area's abundant natural resources and adventurous appeal.

Through the Pilot Community Grant, Anaconda has the potential to greatly increase its winter destination visitors. Portions of the grant will be used to fund the creation of a hockey rink, which could bring in hundreds of tourists for tournaments. These markets represent significant opportunities for expanding Anaconda's tourism footprint.

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

1.
Host and/or sponsor 1-2 shoulder season events and grow winter/cool season marketing to establish the town as a year-round destination.
2.
Re-design the events page on the Discover Anaconda website to encourage businesses to promote their events and draw people to the town.
3.
Develop a business resource page on the Discover Anaconda website to encourage tourism-related businesses to set up shop in the town.
4.
Create and maintain social media accounts on two new platforms to further our reach and expand our audience. The two new platforms are Instagram and Facebook.

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

Lodging Facility Sales Tax (LFST) funds will enhance Discover Anaconda’s goals by allowing us to continue expanding our brand awareness. We plan to use the LFST funds we receive to print and distribute promotional rack cards around the state and surrounding areas.

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
Establish Anaconda as a year-round tourism destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Host or sponsor 1 shoulder season event (e.g., October Harvest Festival, Winter Fest in February)• Increase winter and shoulder season website traffic by 10% compared to FY25		
Support and promote local events to attract tourists	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Redesign the events page on Discover		

	<p>Anaconda website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a self-submission feature for businesses and non-profits • Increase page visits by 5% over FY25 baseline 		
Grow Discover Anaconda brand awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch refreshed brand identity via RAP grant • Increase social media reach by 10% (Facebook, Instagram) • Increase followers by 6% (Facebook, Instagram) • Launch and maintain active accounts on TikTok and LinkedIn • Post at least 1 time per week on each platform 		
Encourage tourism-related business development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and launch a Business Resource Page on the website • Attract 3 new inquiries or business startups connected to tourism services • Track page visits and downloads of resource materials 		
Increase Discover Anaconda brand awareness across Montana and beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use LFST funds to design, print and distribute rack cards 		

	statewide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place materials in 25 strategic locations (visitor center, hotels, attractions, etc.) Track inquiries and web traffic linked to print materials using QR codes or short links 		
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Budget Form: DMO-Budget-Form-LST-LFUT-DiscoverAnaconda.xlsx

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DMO Budget:
Anaconda DMO

Allowable Method	Budget	% Budgeted	Amend +/-	Updated Budget	%
Lodging Facility USE Tax (LFUT) Budget					
Administration	\$2,427.00	8.18%		\$2,427.00	
Education/Outreach	\$1,750.00	5.90%		\$1,750.00	
Visitor Services	\$10,000.00	33.70%		\$10,000.00	
Website Development (Online, Website, Mobile)	\$3,000.00	10.11%		\$3,000.00	
Opportunity Marketing	\$3,000.00	10.11%		\$3,000.00	
Agency Services	\$5,000.00	16.85%		\$5,000.00	
Joint Ventures	\$2,715.00	9.15%		\$2,715.00	
		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	
TOTAL LFUT Budget	\$27,892.00	93.99%	\$0.00	\$27,892.00	

Lodging Facility SALES Tax (LFST) Budget					
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Joint Ventures	\$1,785.00	6.01%		\$1,785.00
		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
		0.00%		\$0.00
TOTAL LFST Budget	\$1,785.00	6.01%	\$0.00	\$1,785.00

TOTAL LFUT & LFST BUDGET	\$29,677.00	100.00%	\$0.00	\$29,677.00
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LFST Revenue Projection	1,785.00
LFUT Revenue Projection	27,892.00
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
Budget total	29,677.00

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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.: