

FORGE  YOUR  
VISIT *Billings*  
OWN  PATH

VISIT BILLINGS  
MARKETING PLAN & BUDGET  
FY23



## BILLINGS TOURISM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT BOARD LEADERSHIP



**GEORGE MARAGOS**

**Chairman**

Northern Hotel



**LORI WALKER**

**Vice Chair**

Home2 Suites by Hilton



**SHELLI MANN**

**Member**

Boothill Inn & Suites



**JOE STUDINER**

**Member**

*Erck Hotels*

Hampton Inn

Hampton Inn & Suites

Homewood Suites by Hilton



**JEFF SCHOENHARD**

**Treasurer**

*Kelly Inn Hotels*

BestWestern PLUS Kelly Inn & Suites

LaQuinta Inn & Suites

Kelly Inn



**RON SPENCE**

**Member**

Billings Hotel & Convention Center



**STEVE WAHRLICH**

**Member**

Best Western Plus Clocktower Inn &

Suites



**TOBY O'ROURKE**

**Ex-Officio/Chamber Board Liaison**

CEO, Campgrounds of America





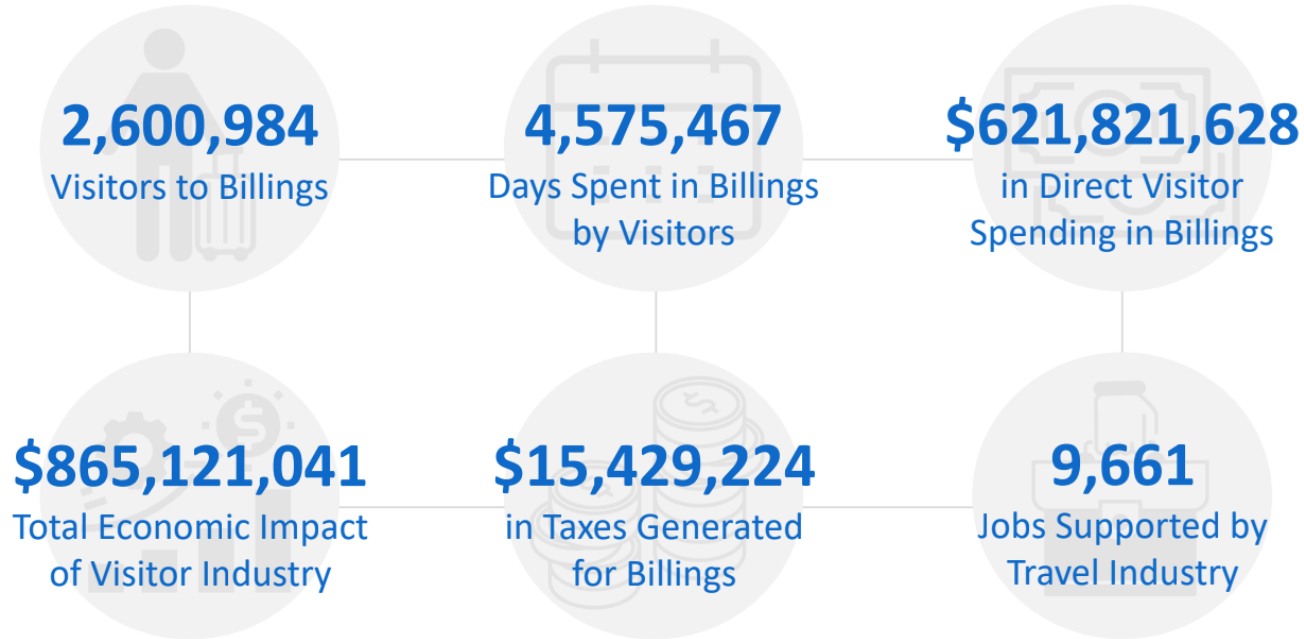
## **MISSION**

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The mission of Visit Billings is to generate room nights for lodging facilities in the city of Billings by effectively marketing the region as a preferred travel destination.

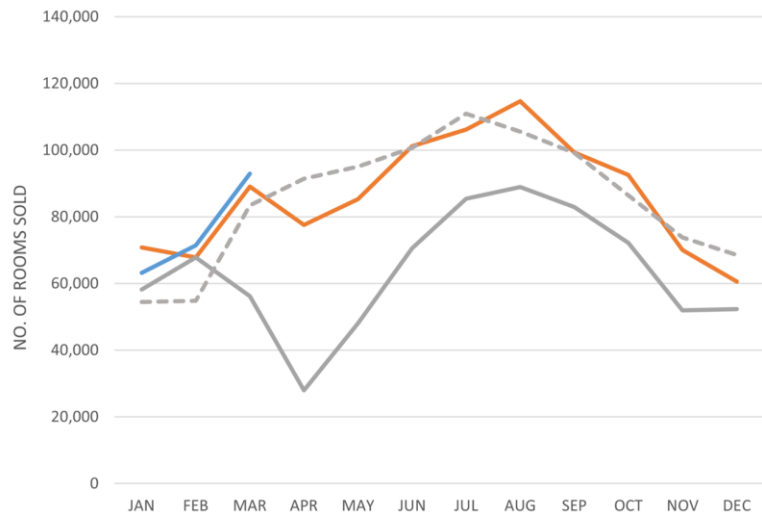
# IMPACT OF TOURISM ON BILLINGS

The profile below shows a summary of key economic statistics emerging from research (Destination Analysts, 2018):

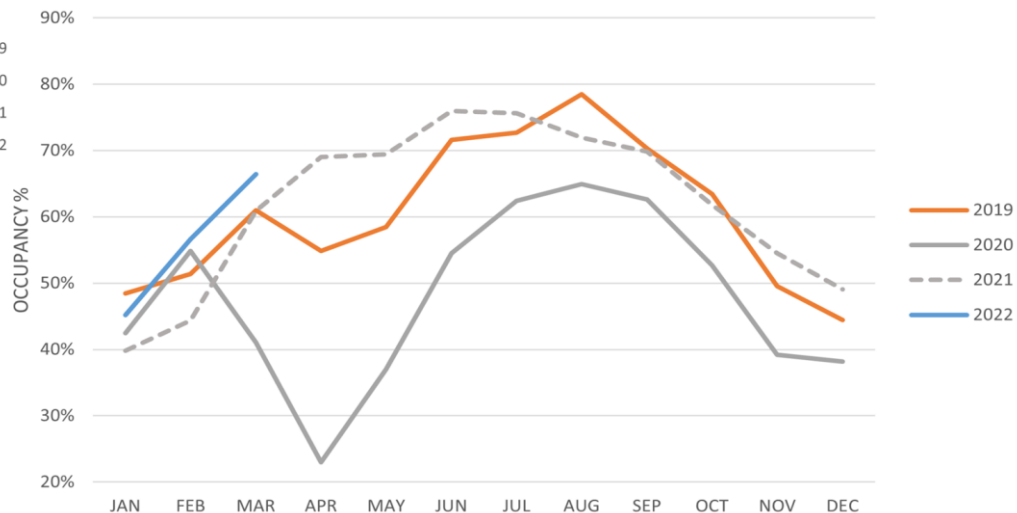


# GROWTH IN CITYWIDE OCCUPANCY & ADR

## GROWTH IN ROOM DEMAND PER SMITH TRAVEL RESEARCH



## GROWTH IN OCCUPANCY PER SMITH TRAVEL RESEARCH



## MEET THE VISIT BILLINGS TEAM

★ **JOHN BREWER, CAE, CATP**  
President & CEO  
Billings Chamber of Commerce  
john@billingschamber.com

★ **ALEX TYSON, IOM, CATP**  
Executive Director  
Visit Billings (BTBID & BCVB)  
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★ **ALY EGGART, MSPR, CATP**  
Leisure Marketing, Sales & Social Media  
Manager  
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★ **LUKE ASHMORE, PDM, CATP**  
Special Projects & Programs Manager  
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★ **MEGAN STEVENSON**  
Director of Finance  
Visit Billings  
megan@visitbillings.com

As managed by:

**it's**  
**BiLLiNGS**  
Chamber of Commerce



# ESTABLISHMENT OF DESTINATION



# WHY BILLINGS?

- ★ Access to **Unspoiled Nature** and **Yellowstone National Park**
- ★ Yellowstone's Most Scenic Route via the **Beartooth Scenic Byway**
- ★ Inspiring **Rimrocks**, Free-Flowing **Yellowstone River**, and **Big Sky** Experience
- ★ **Montana's State Parks** and **National Monuments**
- ★ Significant Historical Sites - **Pompeys Pillar** and **Pictograph Caves**
- ★ Only Walkable Brewery District in Montana - **Billings Brew Trail**
- ★ Vibrant **Community Appeal** and **Arts & Culture**
- ★ Unique **food culture** with a variety of flavor
- ★ One-of-a-kind **urban amenities**
- ★ Accessible **outdoor recreation**
- ★ **BIL**



# FY22 MOMENTUM

# FY22 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



- ★ Strong Growth in Occupancy and ADR
- ★ Minneapolis Marketing Partnership with Visit Southeast Montana
- ★ HSMAI Award; Governor's Conference on Tourism Accolades
- ★ Above the Rim 3x3 Basketball Tournament – New Venue (Downtown)
- ★ Major Convention Booking – NACAA
- ★ Road Race Destination Efforts
- ★ Welcome to BIL – Visitor Facilitation Installation at the Airport
- ★ Zartico Partnership – Geo-location Data
- ★ Growth in Sports Events & Leisure Travel



## CERTIFIED AUTISM CENTER

Visit Billings is proud to lead efforts to become the region's first Certified Autism Destination (CAD). Visit Billings staff members are now certified autism travel planners, striving to better engage with individuals with cognitive disorders. Businesses and tourism partners are encouraged to join in destination certification efforts:  
[VisitBillings.com/autism-friendly](https://VisitBillings.com/autism-friendly).

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSIVITY

Through education, training, advocacy, mentorship, and conversations, Visit Billings works with the Billings Chamber of Commerce to identify and dismantle conscious and non-conscious systemic bias and discriminatory actions within the community. All Visit Billings staff are graduates of Be Better World's DEI class series.

## ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

Visit Billings withstood the global disruption of the pandemic, and continues to evaluate and prepare for disruptive changes that threaten funding and mission execution.

# VISIT BILLINGS STRATEGIC PLAN: 2023-2027

- ★ Identify actions and activities that will benefit the local economy, as well as improve the quality of life for the community.
- ★ Assess gaps in tourism, sports, meetings, and cultural infrastructure to identify potential new or enhanced tourism demand generators.
- ★ Recommend actions and activities to increase visitor flow across all segments (leisure, meetings, sports).
- ★ Assess and define product development needs while also identifying growth and expansion opportunities.

*\*Deliverables to be released to partners and public late summer 2022*





# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FY23

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- ★ Foster Visitor Growth
- ★ Create the Best Possible Visitor Experience
- ★ Increase Leisure Visitation
- ★ Recruit Meetings, Reunions, Group Tours + Servicing
- ★ Position Billings as a Sports Events Destination
- ★ Remain Competitive in the International Marketplace
- ★ Strategic Plan Adoption & Implementation



# MAJOR PROJECTS AHEAD - FY23

- ★ Billings Brew Trail: The Bandwango App **Launch**
- ★ Yellowstone International Air Show
- ★ **Sports** Facilities Developments
- ★ **Sports Tourism** Division **Growth**
- ★ Monitor **Master Plan** Discussions
- ★ **Celebrate** Landon's Miracle Field
- ★ **Support** BIL Progression

# HOW WE MARKET BILLINGS



# THREE PHASED APPROACH



According to the current Brand MT (DOC) Strategic Plan, the best way to consider how the potential traveler considers and contemplates trip planning and execution of an itinerary are the following phases:

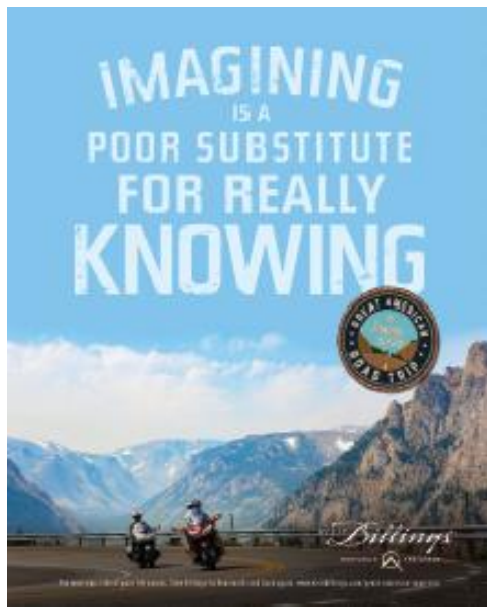
- **INSPIRATION**
- **ORIENTATION**
- **FACILITATION**

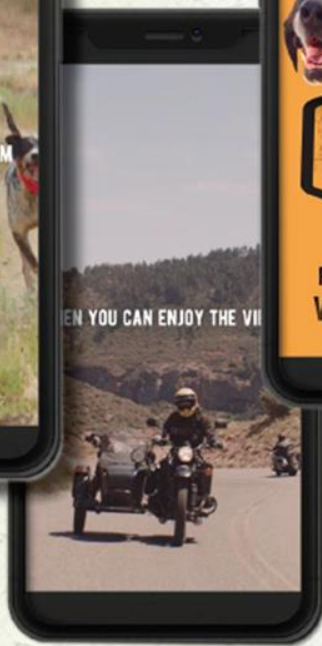
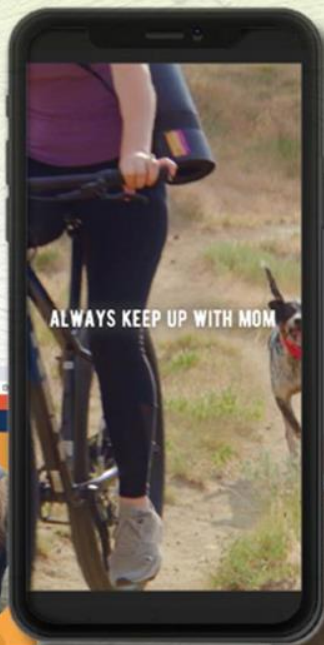
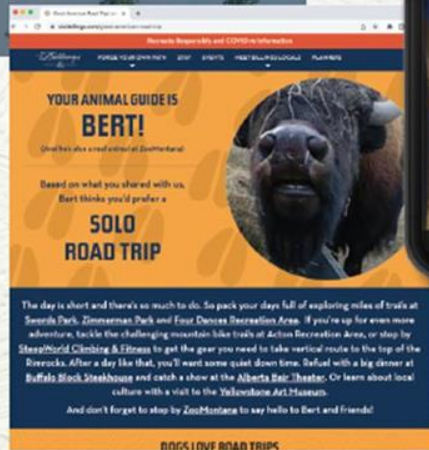
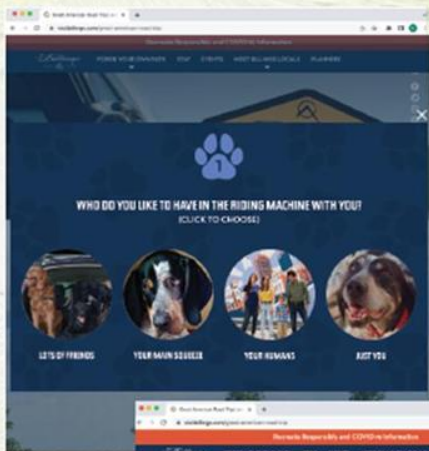


A person in a light blue shirt and dark shorts stands on a rocky cliff edge, looking out over a vast, rolling landscape. A small dog is sitting next to them. The landscape consists of rolling hills and valleys, with a mix of green and yellowish-brown vegetation. The sky is filled with soft, white and grey clouds, suggesting a late afternoon or early morning setting. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

# THE INSPIRATION PHASE

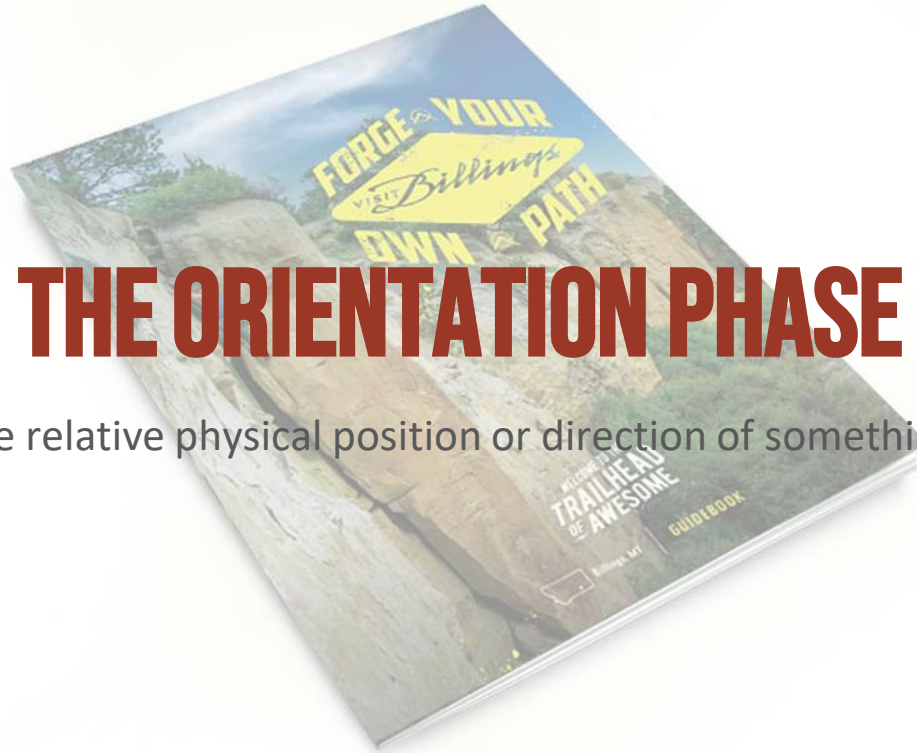
The process of being mentally stimulated to do or feel something, especially to do something creative.





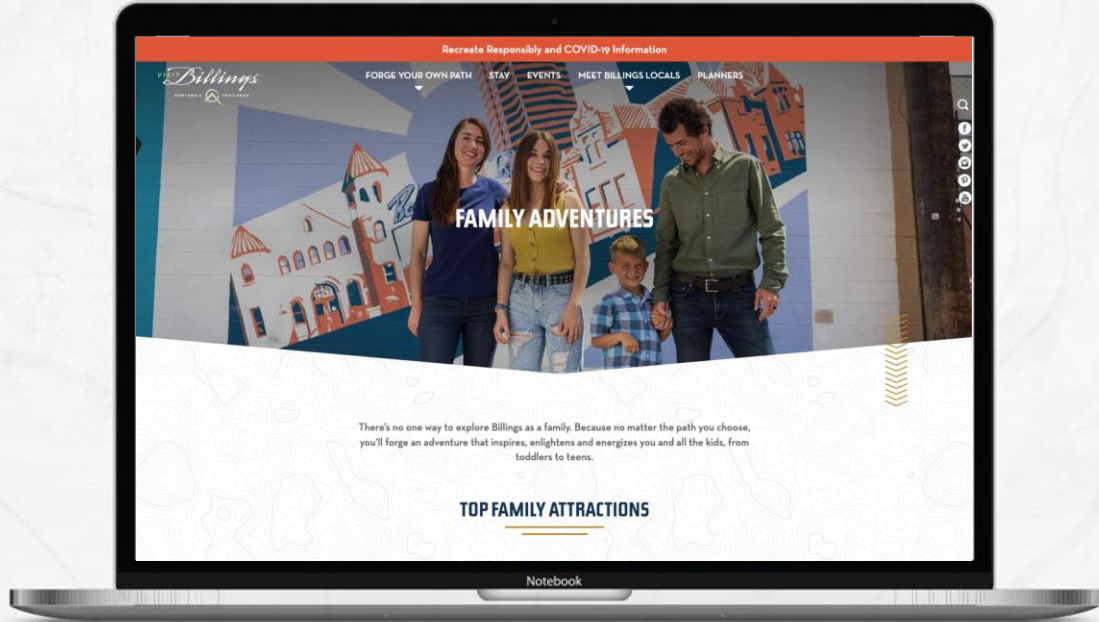
GO FOR A DOGGY PADDLE ON ONE OF THE MANY GIANT WATER BOWLS  
#RickSTIPS





# THE ORIENTATION PHASE

The relative physical position or direction of something.



Recreate Responsibly and COVID-19 Information



FORGE YOUR OWN PATH | STAY | EVENTS | MEET BILLINGS LOCALS | PLANNERS

## FAMILY ADVENTURES

There's no one way to explore Billings as a family. Because no matter the path you choose, you'll forge an adventure that inspires, enlightens and energizes you and all the kids, from toddlers to teens.

### TOP FAMILY ATTRACTIONS

Notebook

# THE FACILITATION PHASE

The action of facilitating something to make it easy or easier.





Visit the Billings Trail Guide page at [VisitBillings.com/trail-guide](https://www.visitbillings.com/trail-guide) to view each video.

Contact Visit Billings for presentation information or additional details at [Info@VisitBillings.com](mailto:Info@VisitBillings.com).



# FY23 LEISURE MARKETING STRATEGY

# RESEARCH

- ★ Americans are most interested in enjoying **scenic beauty**, **warm weather outdoor activities**, **road trips**, dining in regional restaurants, **visiting historical sites** and enjoying street food during their travels.
- ★ 39.2% of travelers say they will increase their **family travel** in 2022 and 32.8% will increase their **travel with friends**.
- ★ More than 70% of people plan to visit beaches, **rural towns**, and **national/state parks destinations**.
- ★ The industry will see longer/extended vacations as travelers try to maximize the reward to **match the effort to travel**.

# CAMPAIGN GOALS

**Increase awareness for Billings** as an ideal warm season travel destination, leveraging the destination's brand, "Forge Your Own Path."

Increase awareness for the **big skies, unspoiled outdoor adventure, a unique urban downtown and hospitality offerings all found in a visit to Billings** - while reminding visitors that Billings, Montana is the most **scenic route into Yellowstone** with incredible proximity to iconic attractions like **Beartooth Scenic Byway**.

Encourage visitors to **experience the culinary and cultural offerings** in the city of Billings paired with the natural attractions surrounding the city.



# PLANNING STRATEGY

Drive unique and repeat traffic to the website with a strategy that leverages digital and video-driven channels.

Evolve the spring/summer campaign so that it still utilizes some of the elements of the Great American Road Trip, but also speaks to visitors in the flight markets, targeting both drive and flight markets. Utilize the full range of video assets that were produced in 2021.

Stay flexible to evolve the campaign as necessary based on travelers' ongoing response to the pandemic situation.



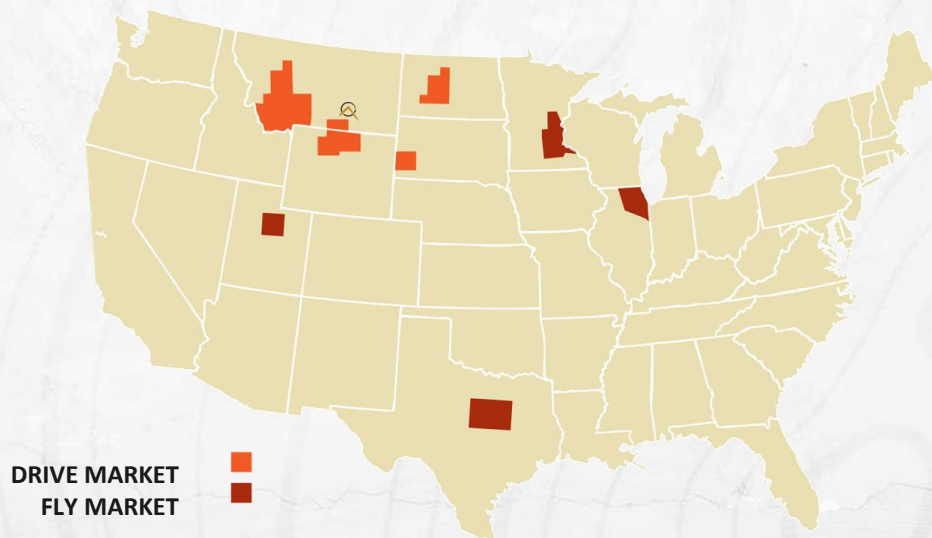
# TARGET MARKETS

## DRIVE MARKETS (DMA)

Bozeman, MT; Great Falls, MT; Helena, MT, Missoula, MT, Minot-Bismark-Dickinson, ND; Rapid City, SD; Casper, WY, Buffalo WY, Sheridan WY, Billings DMA (excluding city of Billings) + city of Gillette, city of Cody.

## FLY MARKETS

Minneapolis, MN; Denver CO; Salt Lake City; Chicago, IL and Dallas, TX



# WE'VE GONE TO THE DOGS

Meet Rick! Visit Billings has developed this personality to fully leverage the creative's potential.

A fun landing page for the campaign has been developed on VisitBillings.com, showcasing an interactive quiz and featuring even more of Rick's videos. This allows the Visit Billings marketing team to promote Billings' life as seen through a "dog's eyes," helping to showcase Billings as Montana's Trailhead - a city without limits, born in the shadows of the Rimrocks, with a path for every personality.



# SPORTS TOURISM



***‘....Sports saved the tourism industry’s bacon in 2020 and 2021.’***

Positioning Billings as a sports events destination will remain a top priority for Visit Billings.

Visit Billings will support partners like Montana High School Association, MSU Billings, Rocky Mountain College as well as the City of Billings and Yellowstone County.

The team plans to leverage any new additional sports facilities in the destination to prepare for future sports bookings for the destination.

# MEETINGS, REUNIONS, & GROUP TOURS + SERVICING



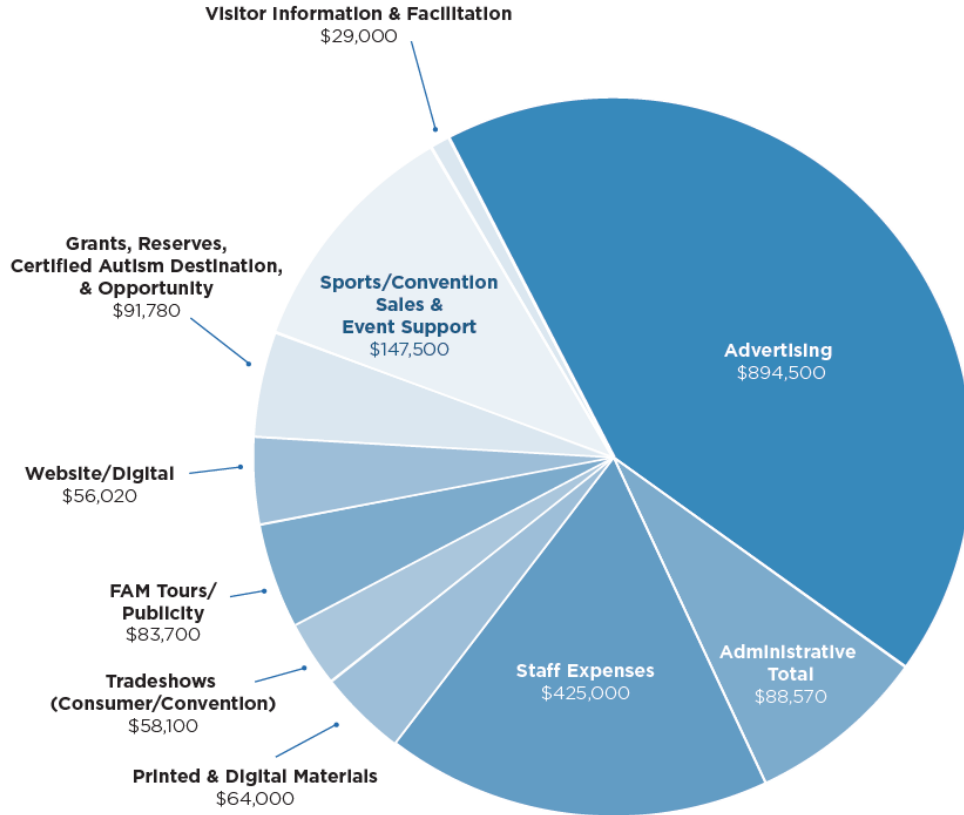
- ★ Build brand awareness for Billings as a meeting destination.
- ★ Foster relationships with qualified meeting planners looking for support to book small-market meetings, citywide events, and reunions.
- ★ Service groups with high levels of customer satisfaction and event execution during the recovery, reassuring planners that Billings is a top meeting destination.

# INTERNATIONAL MARKETPLACE



- ★ Attend IPW, ACGI and IRU
- ★ Continue to work with Brand MT and partners like Visit Southeast Montana and Rocky Mountain International to remain relevant in travel recovery to the international market.
- ★ Maintain relationships with tour operators and stay aware of new product in Yellowstone County.

# BILLINGS TOURISM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BTBID) DOLLARS: FY23



**PROJECTED REVENUE: \$1,939,170**



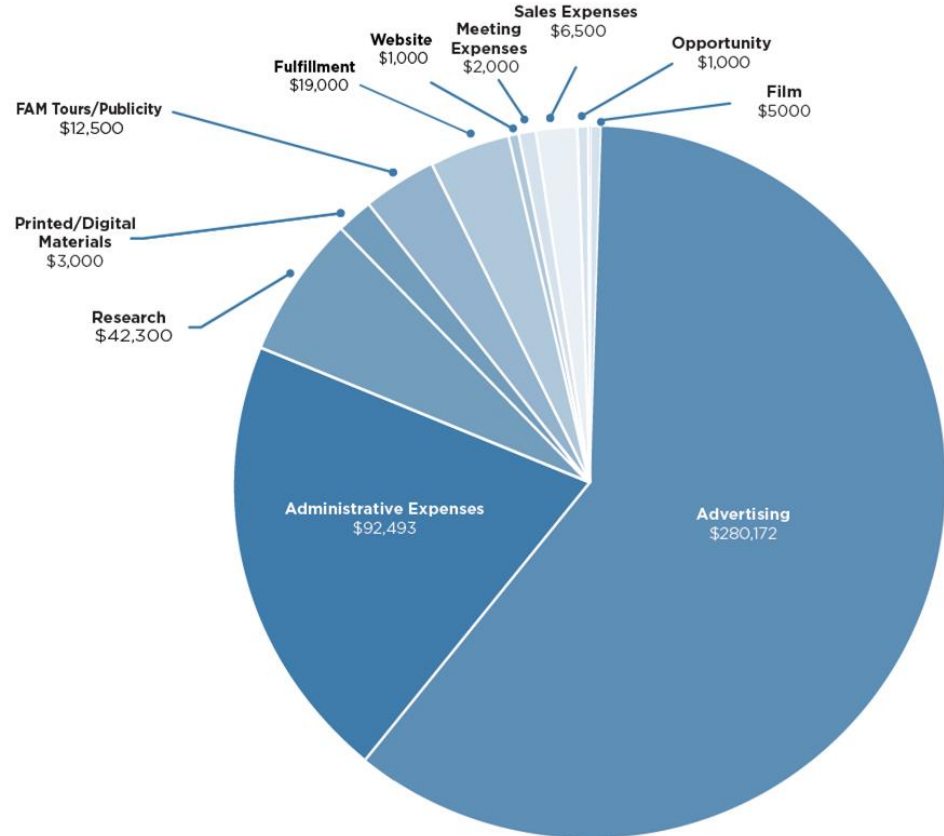
**THANK YOU!**



# STATE LODGING TAX DOLLARS (CVB)

## FY23 CVB BUDGET

<b>PROJECTED REVENUE</b>	<b>\$462,465</b>
<b>MARKETING &amp; SALES TOTAL</b>	<b>\$369,972</b>
Advertising	\$280,172
Fulfillment	\$19,000
Printed Materials	\$3,000
Sales Expenses	\$6,500
Publicity	\$12,500
Research	\$42,300
Opportunity	\$1,000
Film Recruitment	\$500
Meeting Expenses	\$2,000
Website	\$1,000
Staff Expenses	\$2,000
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$92,493</b>



# ZARTICO RESEARCH SHOWS

## TOP VISITOR MARKETS

are currently:

**Butte-Bozeman**

**Great Falls:**

Visitors spent the most time in Billings  
of any other origin market (winter 2022)

**Minot-Bismarck, ND**

Visitors spend is the 2nd highest

**Salt Lake City**

**Denver**

**Missoula**

**Seattle-Tacoma**

**Rapid City**

**Spokane**



## POPULAR PLACES\*:

**Yellowstone National Park**

**SCHEELS**

**Zimmerman Park**

**Shiloh Crossing**

**South Park**

**St. Vincent Healthcare**

**Rimrock Mall**

**Costco**

**Wal-mart locations**

**MetraPark**

**Billings International Airport**

**Coulson Park**

**Phipps Diamond X Park**

**Riverfront Park**

\*Top Points of Interest for Billings and Yellowstone County evolve every week based on events, meetings, and weather. Visit Billings staff monitors Zartico listings weekly with a Destination Dashboard, however, at the time of the creation of this document, these were the top POI.

# ZARTICO RESEARCH SHOWS

OUTSIDE OF BILLINGS,  
MOST VISITOR TRAFFIC  
TO THE VISIT BILLINGS  
WEBSITE IS COMING FROM:

**Salt Lake City**

**Denver**

**Dallas**

WHAT WEBSITE CONTENT ARE VISITORS  
MOST ENGAGED WITH?

**Nightlife/Billings Brew Trail**

**Events**

**Retail**



# KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

To balance quantity and quality of website visitation, we plan to optimize digital media toward conversion actions and monitor for an efficient CPC (cost per click) and CTR (click-through rate). The team will measure 25% of view-through conversions and 100% of click-through conversions.

The following engagement actions will be tracked:

- Landing page visits
- 3+ minutes on site
- Foot traffic to hotels and key destinations



# MARKETING STRATEGY: SOCIAL MEDIA

Visit Billings' social media strategy is focused on sharing the destination's story in a compelling, consistent and editorial manner, thus strengthening awareness for Billings' culture and heightening its position within the online space.

With storytelling as its driving characteristic, the content strategy focuses on extending the Visit Billings' voice into the online space as a persona - the approachable and lighthearted Billings Trail Guide.

# MARKETING STRATEGY: FACEBOOK / INSTAGRAM

Facebook serves as a Billings Trail Guide, posting daily and consistent updates and addressing followers' inquiries in a timely manner. Content includes information on events, photography and video, details on attractions, info on what's new. Facebook is utilized to encourage traffic to the blog or website, and is a platform where paid campaigns are integrated.

Instagram is the inspiration channel, guiding travelers on their dreaming and planning phases. The Instagram channel features compelling imagery and videos, both branded and consumer generated.



# MARKETING STRATEGY: VIDEOS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

Using the footage already gathered from Rick's shoot, as we "go to the dogs," the creative team developed a series of videos where Rick's many Billings adventures can live and be shared.

Staff will edit these clips to show the wide range of activities in "choose your own adventure" short-style films. These also can be shared on Instagram.



# KEY TACTICS

- ★ Increase Investment and expand **geo-targeting** to support **drive markets**
- ★ Optimize audiences and test new targeting tactics within existing channels
- ★ Harness the power of advanced analytics to inform media performance and strategy

