



DESTINATION
Missoula
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Missoula
TOURISM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

2013-14 Annual Report

Reflections and Thanks



UBUNTU!

“In Africa there is a concept known as Ubuntu—the profound sense that we are human only through the humanity of others; that if we are to

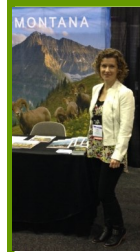
accomplish anything in this world, it will in equal measure be due to the work and achievements of others.”

Nelson Mandela Ubuntu—I Am, Because We Are. Think what it could mean if we all lived this philosophy, not only in our personal lives, but in our business lives. What a different world we could create! What a different business culture we could create!

This is the challenge that we as Destination Missoula and Missoula Tourism Business Improvement District Board members and staff have taken on this year. Ubuntu—I can think of no better way to sum up this amazing year of coming together and culture shift. I am in awe of the courage, vulnerability and honesty with which everyone I work with has looked at themselves and how they show up on a daily basis, owned the good and the bad, and strived to create a culture that considers the success of the whole above that of the individual. We strive on a daily basis to create transparency, show loyalty, extend trust, clarify expectations, and deliver results. As you will see throughout this report, we have accomplished so many great things this year, but of this I am most proud. Thank you to the amazing men and women who made it happen.

And finally to the men and women who on a daily basis make it all work and make it look effortless—my staff: Sage Grendahl, Troy Payton, Mary Holmes, Marina Woodson, Kelly Wimmert, Marit Olsen, Terisa Humiston and our fabulous volunteer Glen “Woody” Wood - thank you from the bottom of my heart. You are the best!

Barbara Neilan, Executive Director



Another year has flown by and I can't believe I'm approaching my two year anniversary with Destination Missoula and the TBID! When I accepted this job I prepared myself to not expect instant results and to learn how to celebrate the small wins. This past year has been filled with a few challenges, lots of learning, unexpected results and even some wins.

We have made some big strides such as, successfully hosting the RMI Roundup, brining on new staff member Marina Woodson and supporting 12 events through the TBID grant fund. One success that is easily overlooked is Missoula's shift in perspective among national and international markets. It can be challenging selling a destination when it appears as though no one has heard of Missoula, MT. However, through this challenge I have learned how easy of a sell Missoula truly is. Missoula is a vibrant, cultured city that is surrounded by natural beauty. How could you not fall in love? As I'm on the road sharing all the awesomeness that is Missoula, I find myself constantly celebrating the little wins. The meeting planner who has never been to Montana and now she is adding Missoula to her wish list; or the Sports Event Owner who has heard how great western Montana is for sporting events, but didn't realize he could fly directly into Missoula. All these little wins have opened my eyes to the bigger picture, the results of simply sharing about the place I love most. Two years ago 75% of the people I encountered while on the road didn't know where Missoula was; shockingly most didn't even know where Montana was. Today 75% of the people I encounter want to know what's new with Missoula. Although these results aren't monetary, they are a big win for Missoula and important to our continued growth.

Looking back on 2013-2014 I realize that I should have prepared more for instant results and celebrating big wins, because they are just around the corner. We have built great momentum this year and I'm excited for continued success in the coming year.

Mary Holmes, Marketing Sales Director

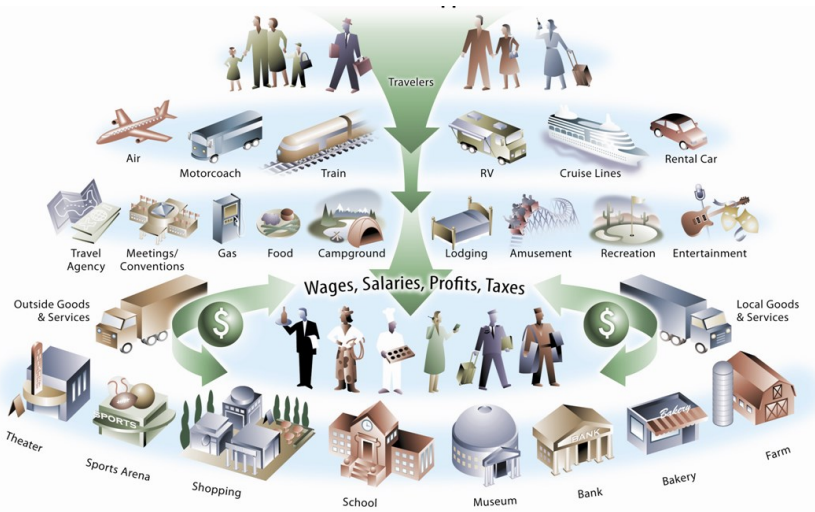
**A huge thank you to our
event sponsors!**

**Terrazas
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The Power of Travel



Non-Resident Travel In Montana

Montana Office of Tourism

Economic Impact: **\$3.6 billion**

Jobs: **34,000**

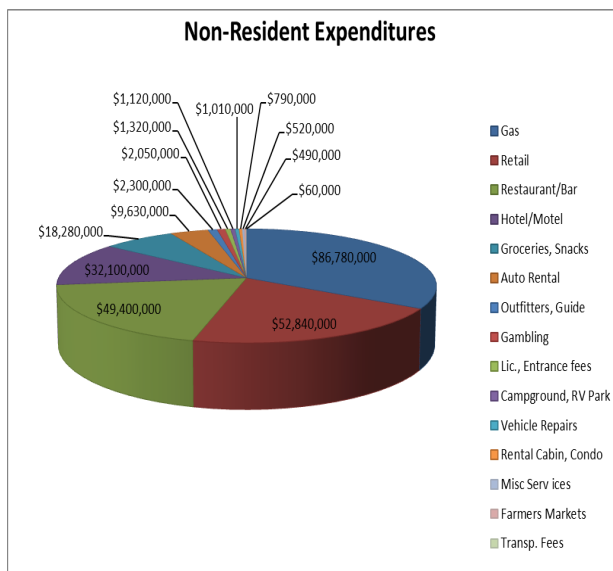
State & Local Taxes: **\$236 million**

Missoula County Tourism

Economic Impact: **\$279 million**

Jobs: **3,260**

State & Local Taxes: **\$22 million**



QUICK FACTS

11 million people visit Montana each year. 3.1 million of those visitors come through Missoula on an annual basis, and 1.1 million spend at least one or more nights in our community.

Without tourism revenue, every Montana household would pay an additional \$549 in local and state taxes each year.

Major Initiatives

UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS MISSOULA AROUND THE GLOBE

Grounded in the understanding that art is the universal language, Destination Missoula and the Rocky Mountain Ballet Theatre (RMBT) have forged a unique partnership to combine performing arts and tourism on an international level.

The Rocky Mountain Ballet Theatre began its international tour with performances throughout Italy, France, Germany, Norway, Poland and Austria. In Austria, they are currently performing with the Salzburg Ballet in Swan Lake gala performances celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Salzburg International Ballet Academy summer program, under the leadership of famed artistic director, Peter Breuer. The company was also invited to perform on opening night of the Festspiele, Salzburg's world-famous music festival, and throughout the event. Additionally, RMBT was recently awarded a US State Department grant to return to China for the third time this Fall for an extended tour of the Guangxi Province – our Sister State in China.

With Destination Missoula as the title sponsor for RMBT until January of 2016, the Rocky Mountain Ballet Theatre will be representing Missoula and all that we have to offer as a premiere travel destination throughout their tours. This is a unique opportunity for Missoula to touch and inform an important international market that we would not ordinarily have the funding to reach. Charlene Campbell and her company have been representing Montana throughout Europe, South America and China since 2002, with their Great American West contemporary ballets. Now is the perfect time to showcase Missoula as the home of the Rocky Mountain Ballet Theatre through this exceptional partnership. For tourism in the US, the international market is increasingly important and China is projected to be the largest emerging travel sector for years to come. With our natural ties through the University of Montana and Ambassador Baucus, we are excited to be one of the first destination marketing organizations in the country to reach into this market in such an exceptional way.

URBAN MISSOULA WAYFINDING PROJECT

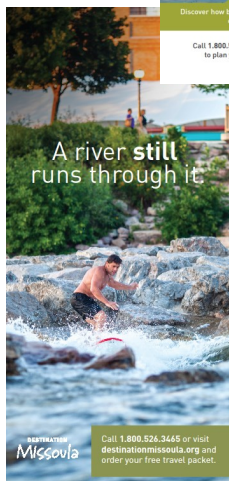
Destination Missoula is proud to be the lead organization in this city-wide initiative. The purpose of Wayfinding is to develop an attractive multi-faceted navigation and marketing program to enhance the Garden City experience for visitors and residents alike. This integrated system will de-clutter existing signage, improve parking and transportation, simplify accessing destinations and increase the positive economic impact of visitors to Missoula. It will use not only unique place-based signage and kiosks, but state-of-the-art web and mobile based technologies, such as websites and mobile apps, to easily direct people to all the destinations and events in Missoula.

For nearly two years, representatives from a cross-section of Missoula's leading organizations, businesses, government agencies and destinations have been meeting to assess the feasibility of an integrated Wayfinding system for Missoula. After extensive research and fundraising, a national RFP was developed and through a comprehensive selection process, MERJE Design was chosen to design our system. MERJE principals have made three trips to Missoula, holding numerous stakeholder and public meetings to gather input and vet design options. This month we have received final design documents, budgets, fabrication and placement specifications to move to our second phase— implementation. We will begin fundraising for this important community project this Fall.

Marketing and PR

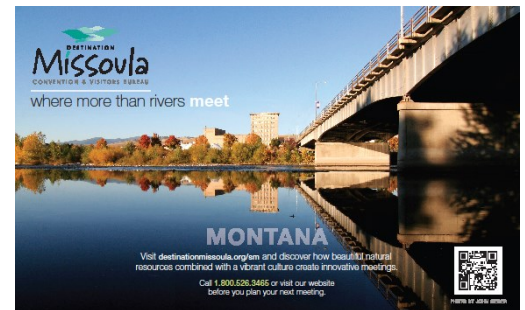
FAMS and Press Trips

Destination Missoula and the Missoula TBID participated in six familiarization and press trips in cooperation with Glacier Country Regional Tourism, resulting in national and international articles and PR about all things Missoula, including fly fishing and brews, winter sports and the Missoula culinary and art scene. Missoula was featured in articles on NYMag.com, ESPN.com, Skiing Mag, Seattle Travel.com, Trip Advisor, Northwest Travel Magazine and the Australian blog—The Packed Bag 500 Challenge. Missoula was also one of only 75 great places in the US & Canada featured in the new National Geographic Book *Dog Lovers Guide to Travel*.



2013-14 was a time for thinking out of the box. Destination Missoula's 2013-14 marketing strategy placed ads in national and regional publications to focus on our direct flight and drive markets to feature Missoula as a leisure, conference and sports destination. These publications were as broad ranging as *Meetings Focus*, and *Smart Meetings*, *Atlanta Magazine*, *Northwest Travel Magazine*, *Yellowstone Journal*, *Montana Magazine* and *Sports Events Magazine*. Our *Like A Local* campaign featured what is uniquely Missoula - our arts and culture, recreation, food trucks, fine restaurants, breweries, wineries, distilleries and plentiful and eclectic night life and entertainment options.

We also placed a greater focus on digital campaigns this year, running two major campaigns targeted at regional, national and international markets. Our *Meetings and Events Promotional Campaign* specifically targeted Montana, Seattle, Portland, Spokane, Boise and Denver. Our *leisure travel campaign* targeted Chicago, Seattle, Calgary, Edmonton, Los Angeles, Minnesota and Atlanta. These campaigns garnered 1,308,531 total impressions with an average click-thru-rate of .42%. The national average for similar campaigns is a CTR of .11%.



By The Numbers

- 265 Pinterest followers
- 815 Instagram followers
- 2,721 Twitter followers
- 3,956 Facebook followers
- 14,783 Click-thrus from electronic outreach
- 40,479 Guides distributed through call center
- 115,000 Visitor guides produced and distributed
- 383,773 Unique visitors to websites
- 2,109,748 Impressions generated

Sales

Destination Missoula and the Missoula TBID proudly welcome Marina Woodson to our team as the Sales Marketing Assistant/Partnership Sales. Our sales team attended nine state, regional and national sports, event and meeting planner trade shows this year. They had a total of 196 direct connections with event owners/planners. Additionally, they provided 16 group leads for conferences that came to Missoula with 5,327 attendees and 5,095 confirmed room nights. Between these conferences and the events that were provided grant funding, DM/TBID helped to bring an additional 89,537 people to Missoula last year!

From successful bids by the DM/TBID sales staff, Missoula was host to the Rocky Mountain International Roundup this year, bringing over 60 International tour operators together with tour businesses from Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, North Dakota and South Dakota to do business. Missoula was the host city for three days from April 30-May 2nd and during that time we were able to host major events, receptions and FAM tours to show all that Missoula and the surrounding valleys have to offer. Participating tour operators came from the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Australia!

We are also pleased to announce that in 2015 Missoula will be the host city to a brand new Montana bicycle event—Tour of Montana bike race and Montana Bicycle Festival! The event is to promote cycling as a part of a healthy lifestyle with a vision of growing cycling in Montana and promoting Montana as the cycling hub of the west. The event will include three days of professional men's and women's Classic Road and Criterion racing, amateur and Gran Fondo races, and Junior racing. The event will feature 100 Days of Cycling, Culture and Art with bike, art and culture events held throughout the community culminating in the Montana Bicycle Festival. This event has the potential of bringing over 2,000 racers to Missoula!

Grants

Over \$70,300 were awarded this fiscal year to support the following 12 worthy events and organizations:

Celtic Festival '13
Senior Little League Softball '13
Firefighter Combat Challenge '13
MT Open Taekwondo Championship '13
Missoula Roundball Club '14
American College Dance Fest '14
MAC Swim Meets '1, '14
Mismo Gymnastics Meet '14
International Wildlife Film Fest '14
Kyi-Yo Powwow '14
Missoula Lacrosse '14
Montana State Swim Meet '14

These 12 events had 35,309 attendees and resulted in a total economic impact to our community of \$5,402,473.

TBID/Sports Commission

The Destination Missoula Sports Commission and Grants Committee have been busy this year, not only awarding grants to help existing events grow and establish new events, but have also been actively bidding on Montana High School Association, regional and national events.

Bid Packages

The Destination Missoula/TBID Sales Team submitted bid packages on 15 new events. Missoula has been awarded:

Rocky Mountain Roundup
The Color Run
Firefighter Combat Challenge
Tour of Montana
State Boys A Basketball
State B & C Tennis
State AB-C Track & Field

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Staff

Barbara Neilan

Executive Director

Sage Grendahl

Director of Operations

Mary Holmes

Sales Marketing Manager

Marina Woodson

Sales Assistant/Partnership Sales

Troy Payton

VIC Travel Counselor

Kelly Wimmert, Marit Olsen, Terisa Humiston

VIC Assistant Travel Counselors

Volunteers

Glen “Woody” Wood




 DESTINATION
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