



Grant Details

125123 - FY24 DMO Plan

128718 - FY24 Belgrade DMO Plan

DOC Office of Tourism

Grant Title: FY24 Belgrade DMO Plan
Grant Number: 24-52-OOT-DMO-008
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Applicant Organization: Belgrade Chamber of Commerce
Grantee Contact: Megan Elliott
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Grant Administrator: Barb Sanem
Contract Number: 24-52-OOT-DMO-008
Award Year: FY24

Contract Dates

Contract Sent Contract Received Contract Executed Contract Legal

Project Dates 07/01/2023

06/30/2024

Project Start Project End

Comments
Amendment Comments

DMO Plan Narrative

1. Describe Your Destination

Describe your destination (who you are, who you wish to attract and why they would come) addressing your strengths, opportunities, and potential challenges.

Belgrade, Montana is the fastest growing community in Montana. We have a mix of small locally owned businesses as well as larger corporations.

Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport is less than one mile away from the Belgrade city limits. We see visitors from all over the country on a regular basis. Belgrade welcomes visitors and provides many services they need for their stay. Visitors will find clean, up to date hotels, excellent restaurants, parks to relax in and other services for their needs. Visitors will find small town hospitality on their way to Yellowstone National Park and to premier skiing.

Strengths

Breathtaking Experiences by Day – Yellowstone Country Montana offers a number of outdoor recreation adventures and historic draws for visitors. Whether it's a day hike to a mountain lake, a guided fishing expedition, experiencing a day on the slopes of the Bridger Bowl Ski Area or Big Sky, or a trip to the Lewis and Clark Caverns, there will never be a dull day when visiting Belgrade, Montana.

Yellowstone National Park – Belgrade is located within 90 miles of Yellowstone National Park, one of the most popular national parks in the United States. The park attracts visitors from all over the world to experience its wildlife, geysers, hiking, camping and other natural beauties in the summer and winter months.

Travel Services – Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport offers 30 direct flights to Bozeman from major cities across the country and it is the busiest airport in the state of Montana. I-90 runs right through Belgrade, making it easy for arriving by car as well.

Year-Round Recreation- Belgrade is a hub for visitors travelling to Big Sky Resort, fly fishing on the Madison River, white water rafting and kayaking on the Gallatin River and accessing the extensive trail systems within Yellowstone Country Montana. We are 40 minutes from two major ski areas and access to thousands of miles of snowmobiling, cross country skiing and snowshoeing.

Parks & Events – Our growing community is home to two major parks and seven smaller neighborhood parks. Lewis & Clark Park is located just off of main street and includes a splash park with multiple picnic shelters. In the fall, Lewis & Clark Park is also home to Fall Festival; Belgrade's largest event. Fall Festival attracts between 5,000-7,000 people every year and we are working to increase the number of out of state visitors to participate in this event.

Vibrant and Charming Small Town – Belgrade is a vibrant, charming small town. There are shops, parks, picnic areas, farm and ranch stores, recreation and a quaint downtown. With lovely landscapes and smiles on every corner, the town is warm and welcoming to all visitors and locals alike.

Opportunities

So many people flock to our area for the outdoor activities, hiking and camping being the top two. Our online/digital and social media marketing campaigns will reflect this. We want visitors to call Belgrade their temporary home while they are exploring all that our area has to offer. Being so close to Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport and I-90, it is easy for visitors to come to Belgrade.

Challenges

We still struggle with Google Maps directing visitors on roads that do not come through Belgrade. These roads are small and not signed well. This can be frustrating to visitors and create a bad first impression. We are doing some research on some Wayfinding information and ways to direct visitors where they need to go.

We often find that visitors will choose Bozeman over Belgrade as they have more services. Belgrade is not a stand alone destination spot. Our online/digital and social marketing campaigns will show Belgrade as an option when traveling to the area by touting excellent customer service, our small town charm and proximity to other destination spots.

2. Align with Montana Brand

Briefly describe how your destination aligns with the Montana Brand.

Unspoiled Nature – Belgrade is settled in the heart of the Gallatin Valley. Regardless of the direction one looks, the city is surrounded by mountain ranges; The Bridgers, The Spanish Peaks, and the Tobacco Roots. Belgrade is also on the cusp of wide-open farm lands, which offer an additional scene to the snowcapped mountains.

Vibrant and Charming Small Towns – Belgrade is a vibrant, charming small town. There are shops, parks, picnic areas, farm and ranch stores, recreation and a quaint downtown. With lovely landscapes and smiles on every corner, the town is warm and welcoming to all visitors and locals alike.

Breathtaking Experiences by Day – Yellowstone Country Montana offers a number of outdoor recreation adventures and historic draws for visitors. Whether it's a day hike to a mountain lake, guided fishing expedition, experiencing a day on the slopes of the Bridger Bowl Ski Area or a trip to the Lewis and Clark Caverns, there will never be a dull day when visiting Belgrade, Montana.

3. What is the strategic role of your DMO?

Select all that apply: Destination Marketing, Destination Management, Destination Stewardship, Destination Development).

Destination Marketing, Destination Management

Based on the strategic role you serve, provide the following information.

3a. Define your audience(s) (demographic, geographic, and psycho-graphic).

1. Belgrades target markets align with the direct flights that Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport provides.

1. Demographics/Psycho-Graphics:

1. 35-65+ years old, adventure seekers who also enjoy outdoor activities, outdoor enthusiasts, family adventure seekers, summer, fall, and winter enthusiasts.

2. Frequent travelers looking for outdoor adventure, National Parks enthusiasts, Families

2. Geographics:

1. Direct Flight Markets:

1. Denver, CO, Salt Lake City, UT, Seattle, WA, Los Angeles, CA, Dallas, TX, and Minneapolis, MN

3b. What research supports your DMO strategy?

When we have conversations about where we place our digital marketing and social media ads, we have found that the cities that our local airport has direct flights to show the best results. We use the information received from the airport manager and the information located on the airports website.

<https://bozemanairport.com/flights>

The Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development is also a great resource that we go to for data when understanding what the trends are for visitation.

<https://marketmt.com/Programs/Marketing/Tourism-Research/>

Because we use funds for social media, we need to fully understand how to market to the visitor. Destination Marketing Association of the West has done research and produced several articles with suggestions on marketing to out of state visitors.

<https://dmawest.org/news/newsnotes/foundation-news/april-2019/how-dmo-social-media-drives-travel-decisions/>

ITRR is a great resource and data mine for understanding visitor spending and visitor tracking. This helps us understand what visitors are doing in our area and how they travel throughout the state. Decisions can be made on how to capture the visitor to come to Belgrade.

<https://itr.umn.edu/interactive-data/resident-q4p2-2021.php>

3c. What are your emerging markets?

We have found that our best digital marketing open rates and social media engagements are in cities that our local airport has direct flights to. In FY23, we have chosen to concentrate on direct flight markets in the following cities:

1. Nashville, TN
2. Chicago, IL
3. New York, NY
4. Atlanta, GA

These cities also have residents that fit within our demographics.

4. Define and describe your overall goals.

A goal is an idea of the future or desired result that a person or group of people envisions, plans and commits to achieve.

1. Keep Belgrade top of mind with local photos and videos. We want to show the authentic Belgrade and what visitors can expect when they arrive. By hiring a local photographer and videographer, we can capture Belgrade during different seasons and compel visitors to stay in Belgrade.
2. When the visitor arrives, we want them to be able to easily navigate our town. It can be frustrating to visitors to not be able to find our local parks or other city amenities. We know that the wayfinding process will take a couple of years to complete, but we want to start the process in FY24.
3. Joint Ventures can leverage our dollars to get the most bang for our buck. We want to be able to expand our reach and add value to our marketing efforts. Joint Venture programs will be a priority in FY24.

Our budget will be used in the following ways:

Administrative: This is the 20% allotment for administrative needs.

Opportunity Marketing: We will use these funds for projects or marketing that come up throughout the year that are not budgeted for.

Joint Venture: Joint Ventures are a priority in FY24 and the use of joint ventures will expand our marketing opportunities.

Product Development: These funds will support the start of our wayfinding program, and photo, and video, libraries.

Paid Media: These funds will support the digital marketing, and social media marketing, campaigns.

Education & Outreach: These funds are used for any travel associated with the grant. We attend TAC meetings and the Governors Conference for Tourism.

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

Goal 1: We will hire a photographer and videographer to capture local images so that we will not have to use stock images in the future.

Goal 2: The process of researching and hiring a company to start putting together wayfinding signage for Belgrade will happen FY24.

Goal 3: In the past, our budgets have not allowed us to be able to participate in joint ventures, as they were too expensive. In FY24, we will be able to afford joint ventures with Yellowstone Country as well as with other DMOs in our area.

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Objectives/Metrics/Evaluation

Objectives	Measurable Metrics for Success	Report the Metric Achieved	Evaluation of Measurable Metrics for Success
Develop our photo library with authentic photos of Belgrade in all seasons. We will use the photos for	We would like to see a 3% CTR increase over FY24 once the new photos are in place.	We achieved part of our objective. We did not acquire a new photo library. We did	Evaluations – although we did not develop a whole new photo library, we got a great step forward with our collection of already produced media. Our CTR for sent communication was at 35% in FY23 and

content on our website, print media, and in our digital marketing and social media campaigns.		achieve our goal of seeing a 3 % CTR increase over FY23	came in at 51.5% up more than 16% points. We only had 32 total click throughs in FY 23 and that was increased to 3619. These numbers are without any print media or digital marketing campaigns outside of social media.
Create short videos to entice the visitor to learn more about Belgrade and want to stay in our town. The videos will be uploaded onto our website and will be used on our social media pages.	We would like to see a 3% increased CTR engagement over FY24 on our social media as well as more followers on our Facebook page. We would like to increase the followers to 2,600.	We did not achieve our objective to create any short videos	We used some reels and short videos on social media but no produced media specifically for social campaigns in FY24. We did not spend any money on social media published posts and had a Facebook visit increase from 4.2K in FY23 to 11K in FY24. We primarily use Facebook.
Improve wayfinding in Belgrade so visitors can easily find the amenities they are looking for. Visitors often rely on Google and that is not always up to date. With better signage, visitors can navigate Belgrade better and safer.	This project will take a couple of years. In FY24, we will research and hire a company to start putting together the information needed for the signage.	We did not meet this metric.	We took steps to become more visible in the tourism community. Becoming a dedicated Visitor Information Center for the first time really helped draw people down our main street to stop in for information.

DMO Budget

Allowable Methods	Amount Budgeted	% of Budget Allocated	Amount Expended	% of Budget Expended
Administration	\$15,447.00	11.35	\$9,870.62	63.9
Education/Outreach	\$7,295.00	5.36	\$128.38	1.8
Joint Venture	\$9,655.00	7.09	\$0.00	0
Opportunity Marketing	\$7,929.00	5.82	\$0.00	0
Paid Media	\$48,175.00	35.38	\$0.00	0

Product Development	\$47,654.00	35.0	\$6,000.00	12.6
	\$136,155.00	100.00	\$15,999.00	

Narrative Evaluation

In FY24, the Belgrade DMO underwent a period of revitalization. With no leadership or staff for the first three months of the year, we faced a significant challenge in establishing a strong foundation. The hiring of an Executive Director with no prior DMO experience added to the learning curve. As a result, much of the year was dedicated to internal education and acclimation.

Despite these early challenges, we were able to meet many of our lower-level goals, laying the groundwork for a more successful future. The internal focus on development and understanding was crucial for the long-term viability of the organization.

However, certain initiatives, such as the development of a photo and media library, wasn't accomplished. We struggled to define clear objectives for these projects early on, which hindered it's progress.

We also explored digital wayfinding efforts with mixed results. One initiative, encouraging local businesses to claim their Google listings, was a success, driving positive engagement. However, another effort—a mobile tour guide—fell short of expectations. It was over-promised and under-delivered, and we had to pivot after minimal response.

While FY24 may appear unproductive at first glance, the lessons learned and the steps taken to build a solid foundation were essential for the future growth and success of the Belgrade DMO. The year was filled with valuable learning experiences, positioning us for stronger outcomes in the years ahead.

DMO Plan Attachments

Description

File Name

File Size