



Grant Details

125123 - FY24 DMO Plan

128712 - FY24 Anaconda DMO Plan

DOC Office of Tourism

Grant Title: FY24 Anaconda DMO Plan
Grant Number: 24-52-OOT-DMO-007
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Grantee Contact: Lorraine Roach
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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.

Anaconda is a town teeming with history and surrounded by undeniable beauty, where history and charm are found at every turn. Located just off the Interstate 90 corridor between Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks, Anaconda offers unparalleled amenities, from dining and cultural experiences to boundless outdoor recreation opportunities. Whether you want to hike the Continental Divide Trail, play a round of golf on a world class course, hit the slopes at Discovery Ski Area, or soak up the architectural legacy from the era of the Copper Kings and we offer a unique view of Montana history. Anaconda is home of the Anaconda Smelter Stack, the tallest free-standing masonry structure in the world. We were pioneers of the Industrial Age alongside Butte-Silver Bow County. Anaconda is alive with history, art, and some of the friendliest people you'll ever meet. You will be amazed by the depth of the community spirit here. Discover Anaconda, Montana's hidden treasure,

STRENGTHS

Our strengths stem from our natural assets Lost Creek State Park, the Stack State Park and being a Gateway City for the Continental Divide Trail. Anaconda has an extensive trail system in town, as well as access to the Beaverhead Deer Lodge National Forest trails out our back door. Outdoor activities abound from a world class golf course to a wonderful ski slope. Our smelting history is unique in Montana and having the Stack State Park helps us preserve that history. We have our Vintage Bus Tour that has brought visitors through our doors to experience Anaconda history. Also, in the last three years new attractions like Gunslinger Gulch Bed and Breakfast (a ghost town), Montana Zipline and the Forge Hotel have added value to attract more visitors.

OPPORTUNITIES

We have opportunities to help some of our events in town. Festival of the Winter Moon, the AOH St. Patrick's Day Race, Art in the Park, Goosetown Softball Tournament, Wildlife Art Expo, and Oktoberfest. Additionally we would like to develop more events for the shoulder seasons. Another opportunity is wayfinding. Where are the lodging places? What fun things are there to do in Anaconda? We have worked on marketing our location as a basecamp for outdoor recreation all year long and will continue to develop a cohesive plan to make Anaconda a tourism destination for a quality vacation – beauty in nature, friendly people and good food.

Anaconda's tourism profile will evolve and grow over time as Anaconda continues to develop and promote its attractions, events and amenities. By targeting a diverse range of interests we can further establish ourselves as an appealing destination for a wide range of visitors.

Discover Anaconda has been working on establishing a TBID in the near future, which will add more monies to help with promoting Anaconda.

CHALLENGES

Our biggest challenge is pulling visitors off of Interstate 90, and getting passers-by to stop in Anaconda for more than one hour, one afternoon or one night. Many Montana residents think we are still that grungy little town holding onto what we were. We want to tell our story of recovery and overcoming our label as a Superfund site. Like every town in Montana, we struggle with a worker shortage and have a few gaps in our amenities. Outfitters are in short supply in our area. Some of our lodging facilities have started to cultivate relationships with "local" outfitters - this is a challenge that we hope our advertising will help with attracting more outfitters to our area.

2. Align with Montana Brand

Briefly describe how your destination aligns with the Montana Brand.

Outdoor adventure is only 30 minutes away. Our geographical location, between Glacier and Yellowstone Park, puts us in a prime location for visitors to see more of Montana's spectacular scenery. We are a prime example of the three pillars of Brand.MT.

- Anaconda is surrounded by “spectacular, unspoiled nature”, The Beaverhead Deer Lodge National Forest, Lost Creek State Park, and Georgetown Lake.
- We are a “vibrant and charming small town.” Our small town charm you can see in the Victorian Architecture in our downtown area, antique lamp posts, boutique shopping experiences, locally owned restaurants, and friendly community. And our local history museum and art gallery – Copper Village, which is housed in the old City Hall built in 1896.
- We offer “breathtaking experiences by day and relaxing hospitality at night.” For example: our Historic Vintage bus tour, we are a Continental Divide Gateway City and our 1936 art deco movie theater. We are a great place to go hiking, fishing, biking, snowmobiling, ziplining, golfing, skiing and hunting. And during your downtime you can visit a local brewery or a wine bar.

3. What is the strategic role of your DMO?

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

Destination Marketing

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

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

The visitor profile for Anaconda, Montana is broad and varied. Generally, this profile includes individuals and groups seeking a blend of outdoor adventure, historical exploration, and a small town atmosphere.

Our target market is Gen X and Millennials from other states who love the outdoors and history. They do not necessarily require entertainment; they can entertain themselves. Our target market is curious by nature and loves to explore. Our role as a DMO would be Destination Marketing. Our Audience are people who enjoy the outdoors and history. This is also a challenge since we are more than seven miles off the interstate and we don't have that many Highway Department signs designating food, lodging, and other attractions. Curiosity about the Stack brings quite a few people to our community. The brown signs about our historic district have also aided in pulling people off of I-90 into Anaconda. We want to optimize our off-season traffic and pull in visitors to make Anaconda their base camp during their stay in Southwest Montana.

Anaconda sees a large number of returning visitors. The first time around they might have missed some of our access to outdoor activity and come back in a different season that offers other outdoor adventures. We offer other activities for the non-outdoors visitor - shopping, bakeries, eateries and leisure walks versus vigorous hikes.

3b. What research supports your DMO strategy?

ITRR tables below for 2019-2022 shows that a smaller percentage of our usual travelers are Gen X and Millennials. This is also our observation of the visitors who come through Discover Anaconda's doors – half are baby boomers and retirees.

See attachment #1

Formerly, MARS would give us reports on phone calls to our region and their interests. We will be setting new baselines with their reports and ITRR on what interests visitors to our region.

Google Analytics has been a useful tool to see the demographics of our visitors to our Discover Anaconda website.

3c. What are your emerging markets?

Outdoor Recreationist: Our location is ideal for several outdoor recreations. We have an extensive trail system through Anaconda. The Beaverhead Deer Lodge National Forest is out our back door. And, did we mention we are a Continental Divide Gateway City? We also have golfing on a world class golf course, boating, water skiing, ATVing, fishing, and cycling is available, and in the cooler months-fishing, hunting, snow skiing, ice skating, and snowmobiling.

History Buffs: Anaconda is a treasure trove of history. We have walking tours in the Historic MT app. The Historic Vintage Bus tour is a great attraction, one and a half hour tour in a vintage 1936 Yellowstone tour bus. The Old City Hall, Deer Lodge County Court House and the Hearst Free Library are just a few buildings that reflect the Victorian era. People are curious about the Stack, what it is and what it was like in our heyday.

Road Trip Travelers: Travelers who just may be passing through to somewhere else are an untapped market. Better signage will aid in enticing travelers to stay and make Anaconda their base camp.

Local and Regional Visitors: Anaconda also attracts visitors from nearby towns and cities within Montana and the region. Families on vacation and day trippers exploring their state, looking for a change of scenery and are looking to explore the town's offerings. Anaconda has good food, specialty shops, bakeries, a Vintage bus tour and a walking tour.

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.

Our goal is to maintain historical Anaconda and its businesses, entice visitors to come on shoulder seasons, and market our natural assets. We hope to see a 20% increase in bed tax collection over the fiscal year 2023. We also want to see an increase in overnight stays from November through March.

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

In general we will be doing some website tweaks such as itineraries for 3 hours, 1 day and 3 days. There is no costs involved with this and we believe that signage, print projects and digital marketing will help us reach our overall goal.

- Update billboard on I-90 and Exit 208, Big Hole Highway 43 at Wisdom. This will help lure the leisure traffic off of I-90 Exit 208. And the Wisdom sign helps other adventurous tourists to take the road to Anaconda.
- Utilizing cooperative marketing grants from SWMT Tourism will help us maintain our steady market of baby boomers and retired visitors with print materials and brochure distribution.
- Marketing Anaconda as a basecamp for recreation in the Southwestern Region of Montana and on the route to Yellowstone, digitally and in printed materials. The digital campaign we did last year helped drive vacation planners to our website to include Anaconda on their itinerary.
- Supporting existing events to fill beds in the shoulder season like Festival of the Winter Moon and the Wayne Estes basketball tournament.
- Visitor Center enhancement with new signage will aid the Visitor when they seek out information.

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Objectives/Metrics/Evaluation

Objectives	Measurable Metrics for Success	Report the Metric Achieved	Evaluation of Measurable Metrics for Success
<p>Update billboards on I-90 and SH-1 (Exit 208), and on Highway 43 (Big Hole Valley) west of Wisdom.</p>	<p>We will be using ITRR, MOTBD, and Voices of Montana Tourism data so we measurable results when comparing increases in lodging tax and spending in Anaconda-Deer Lodge County.</p> <p>KPI: Increase in visitor traffic though our doors. 2023 will be our benchmark year. Guest Register at the Visitor Center.</p> <p>KPI: Increase of dollars spent in Anaconda. 2023 will be our benchmark year.</p>	<p>I-90 billboard at SH-1 exit was delayed until FY25 due to structural issues and construction delays, which increased costs. The SH-43 billboard was postponed until funds are available at a later date.</p> <p>Q1 FY24 (Jul-Sep'23) lodging tax was off -2% from same period in 2022; however, Q2 (Oct-Dec'23) was up 8% over Oct-Dec'22, and CY23 was up 4% overall. In Q3 FY24 (Jan-Mar'24), lodging tax was down -2% from same period in 2023; however, Q2 of FY24 (Apr-Jun) was up 5% over 2023, and CY24 year-to-date is up 5% overall from 2023.</p> <p>ITRR Nonresident Expenditures in Deer Lodge County were \$19.3 Million in 2023, a whopping 85% increase from \$10.4 Million in 2021 and \$19.0 Million in 2022.</p> <p>Visitor traffic at the Anaconda Visitor Center has increased 100-300% in winter months since 2021.</p>	<p>FY24 is Anaconda's first year as a CVB.</p> <p>We did not meet the objective--yet. The I-90 billboard at SH-1 exit was delayed when the contractor discovered that the structure posts were rotted, so a new billboard structure was needed (requiring permit changes and additional cost and time). Funds for this project were carried over into FY25. The billboard design and wrap were completed in early FY25, lumber was purchased, and the contractor will pour new concrete to install posts in late November or early December 2024. The project should be completed in December 2024, which means the objective will be met successfully in FY25 instead of FY24.</p> <p>The delay of the billboard installation was disappointing, but could not be avoided. Once completed, this objective to maintain an I-90 billboard will be continued. The increased cost required postponement of the SH43 billboard west of Wise River until FY25 or when funds are available.</p> <p>A new Anaconda Visitor Center sign was installed in Summer 2023, likely contributing to the increased walk-in visitor traffic, which has grown</p>

			<p>steadily since 2021 according to the Visitor Center guest register.</p> <p>Winter 2023-24 was a poor snow year for skiing and snowmobiling, affecting lodging tax collections in Jan-Mar 2024 (Q3 FY24).</p> <p>Growth in nonresident expenditures has been positive. The categories with the highest increases were gas/diesel, food & beverage, accommodations (especially rental cabins, campgrounds), and licenses/fees, indicating the impacts of inflation, and changes in visitor behavior post-pandemic.</p> <p>Post-pandemic visitor growth - both resident and nonresident - seems to have slowed in Spring 2024, but that was due in part to the poor snow year. The Forge Best Western Hotel and Conference Center opened in 2021, and has seen steady year-over-year growth in sales and occupancy, which has contributed to increased food & beverage and retail sales, along with other activities (ziplining, golf, hiking, etc.).</p>
<p>Marketing Anaconda as a basecamp for activities and adventure in Southwest Montana through Yellowstone Journal digitally as well as in a print advertisement to draw more visitors.</p>	<p>KPI: Increase in 2500 page views of our website by our target market of GenX and Millennials using Google Analytics. 2023 will establish the baseline.</p> <p>KPI: a goal of 5 other DMO's adding Anaconda to their itineraries</p> <p>KPI: an increase in metrics provided by Yellowstone Journal establishing a baseline in 2023.</p>	<p>Website: Unique visitors to Discover Anaconda's website increased from 1,500 in 2023 to 13,000 in 2024 (through Nov. 27) - a 1151% increase.</p> <p>Website users generated 30,000 page views in 2024 (+1155% vs. 2023), an average of 2,730 per month, or 620/week. 51% of website users were Montanans, and 24% were from adjacent or nearby states (CO, WA, WY, OR, ID, UT). Other states of note were CA, VA, TX, OH, MO, NY, AZ, WI, and FL.</p> <p>VisitMT and SW MT Tourism included Anaconda in their activity and itinerary pages. The Anaconda-Philipsburg blog page on the SW MT website generated 2,395 page views. YellowstonePark.com highlighted Anaconda in its Yellowstone-to-Glacier Road Trip itinerary, which generated 30,599 page views. The Butte DMO website lists Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness, Georgetown Lake, the Greenway Trail from Butte to Anaconda, and Discovery Ski Area on its website Adventures section. Discovering Montana and Montana Discovered websites both include information about Anaconda.</p> <p>Yellowstone Journal: Integration into the Yellowstone-to-Glacier online Road Trip Itinerary generated 30,599 page views in 2024 vs. 13,019 page views in 2023, so the traffic to the page nearly tripled.</p>	<p>Yes! We exceeded our objective, so the partnership with Yellowstone Journal continues to be successful in generating interest in Anaconda. The website, social media, and email features of Anaconda on Yellowstone Journal's platforms all generated significantly more interest in FY24 than in FY23, which we considered to be extremely successful and justifies continuing the objective.</p> <p>The Discover Anaconda website was redesigned and moved from WordPress to SquareSpace in May 2023 to facilitate management and usability, which helped with the marketing and traffic to the site.</p> <p>Website user states of origin are consistent with Brand MT's and ITRR's statistics. The SquareSpace analytics did not provide user age reporting, so we were unable to extract only the GenX and Millennial traffic in FY24. Google Analytics was a planned addition, but with staff turnover in 2024, that objective was not completed by the end of FY24.</p> <p>Partnerships with SW MT Tourism and YellowstonePark.com (Outside) have increased Anaconda's visibility and website traffic. The next step will be to follow the thread to outbound links from our website to local businesses and attractions, and to resulting bookings and sales.</p> <p>There is much room for growth, but we are making progress!</p>

		<p>An eNewsletter feature on 9/26/23 generated 64 click-throughs. Another on 2/13/24 generated 7792 opens and 43 click-throughs.</p> <p>A NationalParkTrips.com Facebook post generated 2572 engagements and 789 clicks (vs. 1533 engagements and 518 clicks in 2023--a significant increase). Anaconda content on YellowstonePark.com generated 1669 page views (vs. 1628 page views in 2023, a slight increase in 2024).</p>	
<p>Utilize cooperative marketing grants from SW MT Tourism.</p>	<p>KPI: 2023 13,000 brochures printed and distributed through Certified Folder. This will be the baseline for this project.</p> <p>KPI: 5% increase in bookings with this being the baseline year.</p>	<p>13,000 Anaconda brochures were printed in FY24 and distributed by Certified Folder throughout western and central Montana, southeast Idaho, and northwest Wyoming.</p> <p>Lodging tax collections were up 5% YTD in 2024 vs. 2023.</p>	<p>Yes, we met the objective, and it was successful. Discover Anaconda received a cooperative marketing grant from SW MT Tourism for \$985 to help with the cost of printing/distribution. New in FY24: a QR code was added to the brochure linking it to the website for current information about lodging, dining, beverage, retail, and events. The printed brochure lists local and regional attractions, and includes a map of Anaconda.</p> <p>The lodging tax collections increased; however, while the brochure helped raise awareness about Anaconda, a direct connection cannot be made between the brochure distribution and bookings. Moreover, the increased tax collections reflect both growth in bookings and higher room rates (ADR). Therefore, the KPI of 5% increase in bookings is difficult to link to the cooperative marketing grants.</p> <p>Enhanced analytics for the website in FY25 will provide greater insights about the use of the QR code in the brochure, and the website viewing patterns and interests of visitors who use it. We will modify this Objective and KPIs for FY25.</p>
<p>Visitor Center enhancement with new signage.</p>	<p>KPI: Visitor satisfaction ratings with the enhanced Visitor Center.</p> <p>KPI: Increase in visitor inquiries or information requests at the Visitors Center in the October-March season by 20%, utilizing the Guest Register, over the same time in FY23.</p> <p>By monitoring these KPIs, Discover Anaconda can assess the effectiveness our marketing strategies</p>	<p>A new sign was installed at the Visitor Center in Summer 2023.</p> <p>The Anaconda Chamber Visitor Center received high ratings on TripAdvisor.com and Google. Other visitor satisfaction ratings are based on Guest Register comments, feedback to Visitor Center staff and volunteers, and comments received by local lodging, dining, and retail businesses and attractions. All comments have been very positive.</p> <p>The Visitor Center is the start and end point of the historic trolley tours of Anaconda. In FY24, there was a significant increase in the number of requests for private historic tours from the Visitor Center (for individuals, families, tour groups, and conferences).</p>	<p>Yes, we met the objective of a beautiful new sign at the Visitor Center along SH-1, and high visitor satisfaction ratings. The community and visitor reactions indicate that our efforts are successful. Visitor counts have increased significantly.</p> <p>Satisfaction ratings about the Visitor Center staff and the attractive, high visibility "train station" facility with its historic rail car, appealing landscaping, and historic trolley tours are very positive, as demonstrated by ratings on TripAdvisor, Google, Guest Register comments, and feedback to Center staff, volunteers, and local businesses.</p> <p>One visitor rating (5 stars): "Very Informative And Enjoyed Seeing Inside The History of Anaconda, Jul 2023. Our bus driver John was so full of information on the history of Anaconda, it was a lot to take in, but we enjoyed every minute. Being</p>

	<p>to attract visitors to Anaconda, Montana.</p>	<p>Visitor inquiry counts and information request reports were unavailable for October-March '23-'24 vs. '22-'23 as of this report writing due to a staff change, but will be available at a later date.</p>	<p>able to go inside all of those old buildings and enjoying the history attached to each. Seeing all the grandeur of the church, movie theater and seeing the outsides of some of the oldest houses still in use was something to behold. We also enjoyed seeing deer wandering in amongst the houses and even saw three fawns. What a treat! The history of Anaconda surrounds you everywhere you turn. Take a tour, or just walk around and see all there is to see."</p> <p>Due to staff changes at Discover Anaconda, visitor inquiry counts and reports were unavailable for October-March '23-'24 vs. '22-'23 when this report was compiled. Those figures are expected to be available by mid-December.</p> <p>This objective to attract more traffic to the Visitor Center, and to track visitor counts, inquiries, and satisfaction ratings will be continued in FY25.</p>
<p>Opportunity marketing to support new and existing shoulder season events in October, December, January, February and March in occupancy rate and bed tax collections.</p>	<p>KPI: 15% increase in bed tax in these months, 2023 being the baseline year.</p> <p>KPI: increased attendance at events during these months and other existing events tracked through credit card spending with information from Voices of Montana Tourism and ITRR.</p>	<p>October-December lodging tax collections were up 8% in 2023 vs. 2022. January-March collections dropped -2% in 2024 vs. 2023 due to poor snow year.</p> <p>Event attendance at the Festival of the Winter Moon in January was low because of extreme cold temperatures (-33) and lack of snow.</p> <p>Opportunity Marketing: \$1,500 was used for digital and regional (14-county) radio advertising, plus social media marketing, to support existing events in October and January-March.</p>	<p>Yes, we achieved our objective to use Opportunity Marketing funds to support shoulder season events, and the marketing campaign was implemented successfully. Unfortunately, we can't control the weather. The Festival of the Winter Moon in January was challenging due to -33 temperatures and lack of snow. However, the hardy ice sculptors persevered with their creations, and residents and visitors alike enjoyed the sculptures, which lasted longer than normal because of the cold (silver lining).</p> <p>The January-March 2024 lodging tax collections were down due to lack of snow for skiing and snowmobiling. A warm-up in March caused some melting of the Kennedy Commons ice rink, which impacted planned ice skating and curling events. A portion of Anaconda's Pilot Community Tourism Grant funds will be used to install freeze coils under the ice surface at the Commons to ensure consistent ice quality and a longer season beginning in 2025-26.</p> <p>The KPI of a 15% increase in lodging tax was unrealistic. While the +8% in October-December '23 was positive, post-pandemic double- and triple-digit growth in lodging sales is no longer a realistic expectation.</p> <p>Attendance at spring and summer 2024 events was up from previous years and can be attributed in part to Discover Anaconda's enhanced marketing efforts. ITRR data shows significant growth in nonresident spending from 2021 to 2023. Credit card data was not obtained by Discover Anaconda prior to the end of FY24.</p> <p>This objective to focus on winter and cool season marketing will continue. Event plans will be adjusted to include more indoor activities to</p>

			complement the outdoor fun in case of inclement weather.
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DMO Budget

Allowable Methods	Amount Budgeted	% of Budget Allocated	Amount Expended	% of Budget Expended
Administration	\$4,200.00	19.5	\$3,187.49	75.89
Cooperative Marketing	\$2,095.00	9.73	\$250.00	11.93
Education/Outreach	\$1,000.00	4.65	\$973.69	97.37
Joint Venture	\$2,153.00	10.0	\$4,347.38	201.92
Opportunity Marketing	\$2,153.00	10.0	\$1,250.00	58.06
Paid Media	\$9,186.00	42.68	\$2,795.00	30.43
Visitor Services	\$740.00	3.44	\$3,723.44	503.17
	\$21,527.00	100.00	\$16,527.00	

Narrative Evaluation

In its first year as a CVB, Anaconda identified target markets, goals, strategies, and projects that appeared consistent with SW MT Tourism and Brand MT strategies. KPIs were based on potential measures of success using 2023 as a baseline.

Realistically, Anaconda has a limited budget, staff, and technical capacity, rendering several of the KPIs logistically difficult to measure or achieve. For example, visitor expenditure data is extremely useful if timely. But accurate and timely data can be expensive to acquire and requires some expertise to interpret and to determine implications for future marketing strategies. ITRR data is available at no cost, but it is delayed, so it serves to reveal past trends upon which future decisions can be made rather than real-time data.

Like many other DMOs, Anaconda relies heavily on printed materials and ads for promotion, despite traveler research (ITRR and others) indicating that travelers increasingly use online/digital sources to plan their trips. Anaconda needs to focus more narrowly on strategically targeted visitors. We could benefit from additional technical assistance from Brand MT and its data and agency resources to inform that process.

Partnerships in advertising and information distribution like YellowstonePark.com and SW MT Tourism generated significant views and clicks, but Discover Anaconda needs data analysis tools like Google Analytics, VisaVue, Zartigo's Digital Campaign Optimization, and others to better understand user interests, patterns, demographics, and conversions.

These data tools are needed to track end-to-end visitor data from initial views to clicks, information-gathering, conversions, bookings, spending, etc. Those insights can be used to adjust strategies in real time and also help local

businesses/attractions better understand their visitor markets, messaging, and effective strategies.

DMO Plan Attachments

Description

File Name

File Size

Reg/CVB Required Documents

Description	File Name	File Size
Discover Anaconda Bylaws	ALDC Bylaws Final 2022.pdf	152 KB
April 2023 Board Meeting Minutes RE: CVB formation	DA Board Meeting Minutes April 2023.pdf	129 KB
Compliance 2023	FY24 CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE.pdf	409 KB

