



Grant Details

125123 - FY24 DMO Plan

128727 - FY24 HAVRE DMO PLAN

DOC Office of Tourism

Grant Title: FY24 HAVRE DMO PLAN
Grant Number: 24-52-OOT-DMO-018
Grant Status: Underway
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Applicant Organization: Havre Area Chamber of Commerce
Grantee Contact: Shelli Sayers
Award Year: FY24
Program Area: DOC Office of Tourism
Amounts:
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Contract Dates

Contract Sent Contract Received Contract Executed Contract Legal

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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.

Strengths

Havre has a diverse geography with the Milk River running through flanked by wheat fields and pastures in the plains. Just south of Havre we transition from the plains into the foothills and buttes, and into the Bear Paw Mountains, North of Havre we have the beauty of the badlands and access to Canada. The diverse landscape attracts a wide variety of wildlife. Havre offers visitors western spirit, rich history, small town charm, and Montana hospitality.

We welcome visitors to take deep breaths of the fresh air, relax, and enjoy a slower pace of life. We offer wide open spaces, big skies, abundant wildlife, outdoor recreation, unobstructed dark skies, and views of the northern lights. We encourage visitors to learn about our rich history and agriculture based community all while feeling right at home.

Three historic districts help to depict the historic charm of Havre. Havre is also located just north of the Rocky Boy Reservation, home of the Chippewa-Cree Tribe. Havre is the closest town with lodging for visitors of the Rocky Boy Reservation. Each year the tribe hosts a variety of events such as Powwows. Due to the proximity to the reservation we see an increase hotel stays during their events. The four seasons provide year-round recreation, an outdoor paradise for all from hunting and fishing to boating and camping, downhill and cross country skiing, sledding, ice fishing, skating, and snowshoeing. Havre is the proud home of Montana State University Northern which hosts 1100 students. The addition of the MSUN football stadium provides the opportunity to bring more people to Havre and more hotel stays. The Armory gym and auditorium facilities MSUN allow Havre to host conferences resulting in hotel stays. We are situated along highway 2 on the Hi-Line so we do have the ability to capture travelers traveling to and from Glacier National Park/the Flathead, Canada, and just passing through our state.

Opportunities

Our goal is to entice those travelers to spend the night in Havre and check out all of the wonderful attractions we have to offer such as Havre Beneath the Streets, Wahkpa Chu'gn Buffalo Jump, Fort Assiniboine, H Earl Clack Museum, Beaver Creek Park, the Dinosaur Trail, the ruggedness of the Badlands, off road trails, camping, and outdoor recreation. Being a small town in rural Montana also offers the opportunity for night sky viewing unobstructed by light pollution. The Northern lights often dance across our sky and we have a variety of wildlife viewing areas. Having an Amtrak station offers Havre an advantage to capture tourists traveling by train. The Empire Builder operates between Seattle and Chicago with stops daily in each direction in Havre. The train depot is located in the heart of downtown with walkability to dining, drinking, lodging, historical attractions, parks, and community events held at Town Square park. We also gain a few Montanan's hopping on and off the train at Havre. The two-lane highway is an advantage to gain travelers touring on motorcycles and bicycles. The majority of people touring on motorcycles and bicycles travel along 2 lane highways so they can enjoy the ride, take in the views, and enjoy the journey. Part of the journey for these travelers is stopping in the small towns and at the attractions along the way. We are also adding a splash park to our pool this summer, this provides us with another enticing attraction for families traveling with children to spend the night in Havre. There is a lot of untapped potential to capture more travelers and entice them to stay in Havre along their travels whether it be by car, train, motorcycle, or bicycle.

Challenges

We promote Havre as being a rural community that offers opportunity to escape the city and the crowds. Being rural also has its challenges. We are located along the Hi-Line in North Central Montana. We have an airport, but it is very small only hosting 2 flights per day in and out of Billings, Montana. Our closest airport of size is located 110 miles (2 hours) south in Great Falls, Montana. We are on Highway 2, a two lane highway, vs a 4 lane highway or interstate. We are also 40 miles from a port of entry to Canada, however 100 miles to the West is a 24 hour port of entry on an interstate so we lose some of the tourists when they choose the 24 hour port of entry. We are "off the beaten path" for a large portion of travelers passing through Montana. The majority of travelers choose the interstate that runs along the Southern half of the state. When we host events, one of our greatest challenges is convincing tourists and travelers to choose Havre vs. the well-known, highly desirable tourist destinations such as SW Montana, Yellowstone, the Flathead, and Glacier National Park.

2. Align with Montana Brand

Briefly describe how your destination aligns with the Montana Brand.

More spectacular unspoiled nature

Havre is home to clean air, wide-open spaces, big skies free from light pollution. Our physical geography boasts creeks, rivers, lakes, badlands, buttes, plains, foothills, and mountains. The diverse landscape offers a wide variety of wildlife and recreation opportunities. We're also home to the nation's largest county park, Beaver Creek Park. Hill County is 2916 square miles with a population of 16,000 people, that averages out to 5.6 people per square mile. The average population density in the US is 94 people per square mile. It's safe to say, we have spectacular, unspoiled nature in Havre and Hill county.

Vibrant and charming small town

Havre is the regional hub for Hill County and the Hi-line. We are the 9th largest town in Montana, which makes us a charming town on the Hi-Line that offers small town hospitality. We have over 500 locally owned small businesses that will satisfy all your shopping, dining, entertainment, and lodging needs. Our historic downtown offers an Art Alley, park, shops, restaurants, taverns, and hotels. The Art Alley, historic attractions, and murals make us unique.

Breathtaking experiences by day, relaxing hospitality at night

There is no shortage of adventures, experiences, and attractions to keep visitors busy during the day. Havre offers a variety of experiences including hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, and other outdoor recreation. History is prominent along the Hi-Line, we offer tours, museums, galleries, and historic properties. Our most unique attractions include Havre Beneath the Streets, Wahkpa Chu'gn Buffalo Jump, Fort Assiniboine, and the H. Earl Clack Museum which is on the Dinosaur Trail. Havre has 7 hotels that range from small, locally owned to new, namebrand hotels. Our accommodations offer everything from affordable, unique, and quaint locally owned motels to luxurious comfort, high speed internet, continental breakfast, and indoor pools. We also have a few AirBnB's, and 7 campgrounds in our area that can handle all sizes of campers. Havre boasts blog worthy restaurants with delicious food: Rod's Drive In with their iconic, must have, Ugly Burger and fine dining options such as Bow and Marrow or RigaTony's. We have one brewery and one distillery. Havre also is home to Montana Actors Theatre where they put on spectacular live theater that will whisk you away into fantastical experiences that you won't find anywhere else in Montana. And if that isn't enough, there's always something going on - from karaoke and live music to fundraising galas and brewfests.

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).

Leisure Travelers: Adults 35 years old and older with a household income of \$75,000+ that may or may not be traveling with children in the summer months. They participate in shopping, visit historic sites and museums and enjoy outdoor activities.

Travelers visiting family and/or friends: Adults 35 years old and older with a household income of \$75,000+ that may or may not be traveling with children. They are in the area to attend a specific event or visit with family and friends. They will be looking to do activities in the area, such as outdoor recreation, enjoy nightlife, breweries and dining. They are also likely to visit museums or other attractions.

Active Travelers: Adults 35-65 years old with a household income of \$75,000+ that may or may not be traveling with children. These are the types of travelers that are most likely to enjoy outdoor activities, such as biking, hiking, fishing, wildlife viewing, skiing and snowmobiling. They are likely to enjoy the nightlife, breweries, and check out unique dining opportunities.

Cultural Travelers: Adults 35-65 years old with a household income of \$75,000+ that may or may not be traveling with children. They seek cultural experiences and enjoy everything cultural a place has to offer, such as museums, galleries and historical sites. They want to learn everything about the place they visit.

The psychographic characteristics of Havre's target market include those who value local businesses, support locally grown or produced items, enjoy scenic landscapes, value access to public lands, waterways, and open space, and seek out unique experiences. Millennials have changes the way people travel - they value more frequent, shorter getaways such as long weekends vs week-long destination vacations.

3b. What research supports your DMO strategy?

We use data generated through the Interactive Data link on the website for Tourism and Recreation Research by the Montana Office of Tourism, and inquiries made at the Havre Chamber and the visitor log, and the Havre Chamber's website analytics, which hosts tourism information. Measurement will be by FY23 vs FY24 comparison.

We utilize ITRR and VisaVue to pinpoint visitors point of origin and where they are spending money.

The Bear Paw Marathon also provides a source of information - participants register through runsignup.com, which tracks each participants origin. TBID grant recipient wrap-ups reports also provide how many participants were at the event, where people traveled from, and how many nights they stayed in Havre.

3c. What are your emerging markets?

Astro-tourism: In collaboration with Southeast Montana and Missouri River Country we are preparing to launch Trail to the Stars. A website was developed to highlight places to view the night sky. Montana's Trail to the Star spans the eastern region of Montana and will ultimately include more than 50 locations, all ideal for stargazing. Beaver Creek Park is one of the locations for stargazing.

Agri-Tourism: Many within our target market are looking for safe, family vacations that return them to an unhurried, more grounded experience. Highlighting rural events, lifestyles and products produced on our region's farms and ranches will increase visitor awareness and can ultimately provide supplemental income for agricultural and ranching operations.

Marathon Running: Havre is hosting the 3rd annual Bear Paw Marathon in June. Each year the marathon has grown in popularity. Last year we had 325 runners from 13 states and two Canadian provinces.

Motorcycle & Bicycle Touring: Travelers touring by way of motorcycle and bicycle like to take two lane highways, secondary highways, and scenic routes. Havre is situated on Hwy 2 and Hwy 87, both well maintained two lane highways. For these types of travelers, it's more about the journey than the destination. We offer scenic views and small town charm for these travelers to take a break, grab a bite, refuel, and stretch their legs.

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.

Goal 1: Market Havre as the BEST place to stay for travelers along the hi-line

Goal 2: Build Havre's brand: A destination for the authentic Montana Experience: rich history, outdoor recreation, unspoiled nature, charming

Goal 3: Increase hotel stays in Havre

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

Goal 1 Tactic: Promote Havre and all of the amenities we offer to travelers along highway 2 through social media, billboards, and print advertising in Central Montana Magazine, Glacier Country Magazine, Havre Visitors Guide, and the Hi-line Traveler's guide

Goal 2 tactic: Create a marketing campaign that promotes all of the attractions we offer in Havre and Hill County: stargazing, outdoor recreation, tours, museums, etc. The campaign will be executed through a combination of

billboards, social media, website development, and print advertising

Goal 3 tactic: Create travel itineraries specific to the different types of travelers interested in our area. Itineraries will include things to do, places to stay, and must try local dining options in and around Havre

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Objectives/Metrics/Evaluation

Objectives	Measurable Metrics for Success	Report the Metric Achieved	Evaluation of Measurable Metrics for Success
Increase awareness of Havre, Montana as a destination and great place to stay for passersby	Increase hotel stays by 3% YoY measure through hotel tax collections	Hotel stays for FY24 were the same as FY23	We did not meet our objective for an increase of 3% YOY for FY24, as our hotel stays based on bed tax collections remained flat and did not increase or decrease. This is mostly due to employee turnover and new employees in new roles. We have since stabilized our organization with a renewed focus on tourism promotion. We are continuing to use this method of tracking to evaluate Havre's success in promoting our area.
Promote the attractions Havre has to offer visitors	Increase social media following by 10% through organic posts and paid ads that promote Havre. Increase website impressions by 3%	Discover Havre Montana Facebook page followers increased 14.3% for FY24. Website impressions increased by 1.1%.	Yes, we exceeded our objective to increase our social media following by 10% with an actual increase of 14.3% due to consistent organic posts promoting Havre and area attractions. We only increased website impressions by 1.1%, so we did not achieve that objective. We will continue to utilize these tools that drive traffic to our social media and website.
Enhance the visitor experience by	Create 3 trip itineraries and promote them through social media, print ads, and visitor centers in Canada to	Visits to the Havre area visitors center increased 4% YOY according to completed guest	We met our objective for visits to the Havre area visitors center, but did not collectively meet our objective for area attraction visits. This is due to several factors

taking the stress out of planning a trip	increase area attraction visits by 3% YoY (Havre Visitors Center, Beaver Creek Park, Fort Assiniboine, H. Earl Clack Museum, Wahp 'Chugn Buffalo Jump, and Havre Beneath the Streets,)	book entries. Havre Beneath the Streets, Beaver Creek Park, Fort Assiniboine, H. Earl Clack Museum, and Wahp 'Chugn Buffalo Jump collectively remained flat for visits in FY24.	<p>beyond our control. Havre Beneath the Streets encountered substantial flooding during peak season and needed to close for a significant period of time for cleanup. Fort Assiniboine, the Clack Museum, and Wahp 'Chugn Buffalo jump all experienced employee turnover and difficulty maintaining paid staff and volunteers to operate during regular hours during peak season as well.</p> <p>We created, published and distributed a new Havre area visitors guide highlighting our area attractions and amenities, as well as paid print and social media ads to highlight our unique area, local events, and attractions.</p> <p>We are continuing to build relationships with our tourism partners to promote the attractions available to our visitors.</p>
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DMO Budget

Allowable Methods	Amount Budgeted	% of Budget Allocated	Amount Expended	% of Budget Expended
	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0
Administration	\$4,107.00	20.0	\$0.00	0
Education/Outreach	\$1,500.00	7.3	\$0.00	0
Opportunity Marketing	\$2,500.00	12.3	\$0.00	0
Paid Media	\$9,100.00	44.2	\$0.00	0
Website Development (Online, Website, Mobile)	\$3,331.00	16.2	\$0.00	0
	\$20,538.00	100.00	\$0.00	

Narrative Evaluation

FY24 was a rebuilding time for the Havre DMO, as we faced challenges in employee and board member turnover. Havre Beneath the Streets-one of our main area attractions, also encountered significant flooding and unexpected closures due to excessive rainfall. Our other area attractions had difficulty at times maintaining consistent hours of operation due to shortages of employees and volunteers. We continue to partner with these organizations to showcase the attractions that make Havre special.

We did experience a YOY double digit percentage (14.3%) increase in our social media presence, a slight increase in website traffic (1.1%), and an increase of walk in visitors to our Havre visitors center (4% based on guest book entries). The publication and distribution of the new Havre visitors guide, as well as a revamping of our website (the

first major update since 2018) are also highlights to our FY24. Overall, despite the challenges we faced, we overcame several obstacles in the promotion of Havre tourism. Overall our digital footprint has increased, and continues to increase.

The Havre DMO also continued to host and/or promote several events to encourage visitation to Havre. The Bear Paw Marathon, Living History Day, Art Alley Celebration, Sounds on the Square, Saturday Market, and Havre Festival Days are all events that encourage visitors to travel to Havre.

DMO Plan Attachments

Description	File Name	File Size
Havre FY24 Budget to Actual Report	Havre FY24 B2A.xlsx	24 KB

Reg/CVB Required Documents

Description	File Name	File Size
HAVRE LODGING TAX COLLECTION BUDGET FY24	HAVRE LODGING TAX COLLECTIONS BUDGET FY24.docx	25 KB

