



OBJECTIVES + TACTICS + METRICS

FISCAL YEAR 2026
JULY 1, 2025 – JUNE 30, 2026

ADOPTED
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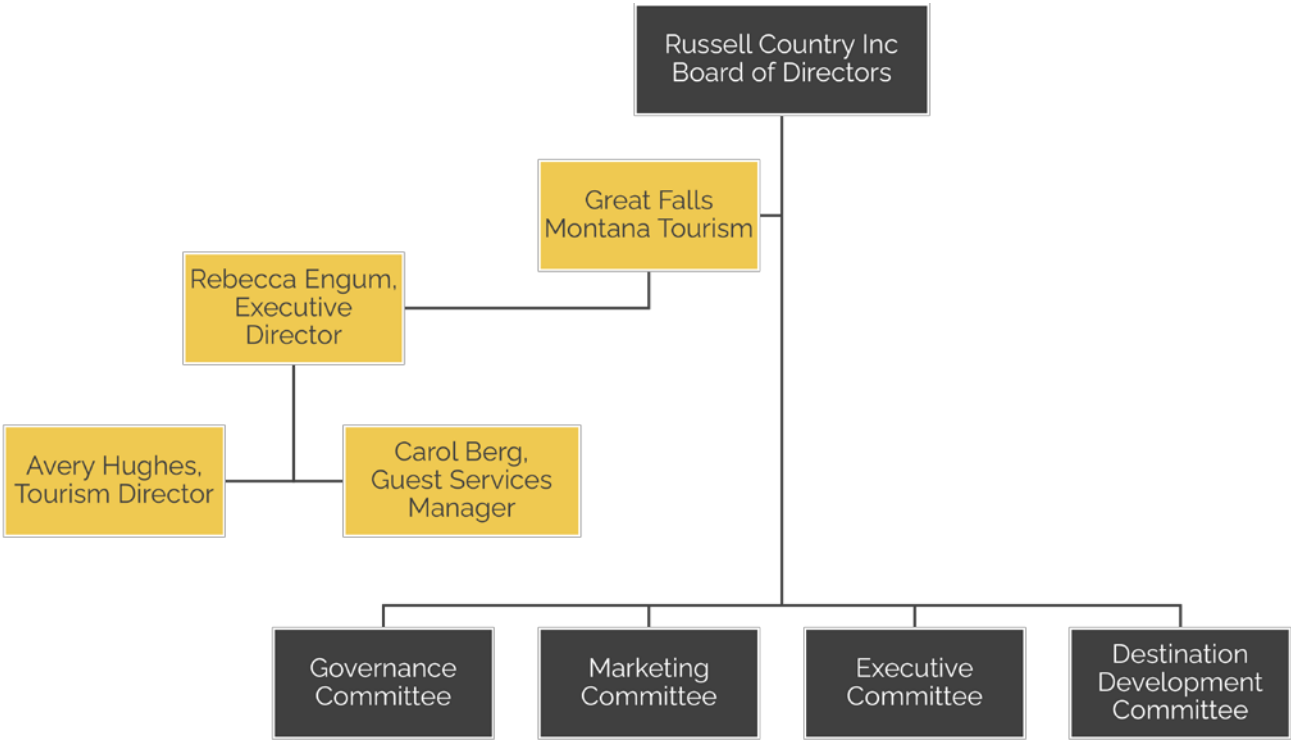
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SUMMARY
ABOUT

Central Montana is where the mountains meet history and the plains come alive. Where sunrise is contagious, and adventure knows no bounds. Where millions of years of history slow down and connection fills the time. That's Central Montana. It's real and it's raw – connected, yet untamed. It's the soul of Montana, the heart of the West. And hidden between its dancing landscape and star-dusted skies is a bigger story still waiting to be found.

Central Montana Tourism is a regional Destination Organization that advances the economic vitality of the 13-counties of Fergus, Toole, Liberty, Hill, Blaine, Teton, Wheatland, Meagher, Judith Basin, Pondera, Chouteau, Cascade, and Petroleum through effective marketing, destination development, advocacy, and knowledge growth that preserves the region's unique character, honors residents' quality of life, addresses visitor needs, and enhances business opportunities. We are one of 6 geographic tourism regions established in Montana and predominately focused on marketing.

In October 2024, Central Montana entered into a management agreement with Great Falls Montana Tourism to provide staffing, administrative support, organizational infrastructure that includes the services of a bookkeeper, and a physical location for the organization.



This management agreement allows Central Montana the ability to leverage professional knowledge and staff to better manage daily operations and free up the time for the Board of Directors to focus on strategy and the future of the organization.

Under this management agreement, Great Falls Montana Tourism implements the strategies established by the Board of Directors within the budget established by the Board of Directors. The

staff assigned to Central Montana ensure the organization has the funds available to implement the strategies adopted and ensure efficient implementation of strategies that will produce impact.

Central Montana is chock full of unique attractions and entertainment that draw tourists to our region. Here, *unique* refers to something specific to Central Montana, rarely seen outside of the area, and easily accessible to the average person. These unique features often have historical or regional significance and a connected story.

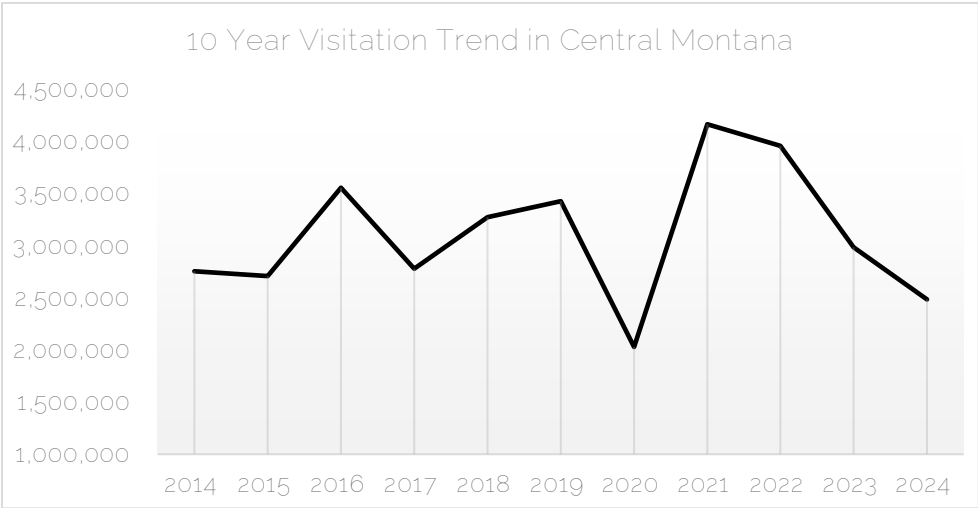
An *attraction* in Central Montana is defined as something that maintains established hours of operation, is routinely experienced by non-residents, and has a digital repository of information. Attractions are usually managed by a non-profit organization or company in good standing, may have historical or regional significance, are independently promoted, and can transfer knowledge to those it engages.

Entertainment in Central Montana provides a sense of shared experience to a general populous, has visual and/or auditory appeal, and offers enjoyment or amusement reliably and frequently throughout the year. Entertainment typically includes performative, interactive, or recreational aspects that lend to potential evergreen promotion.

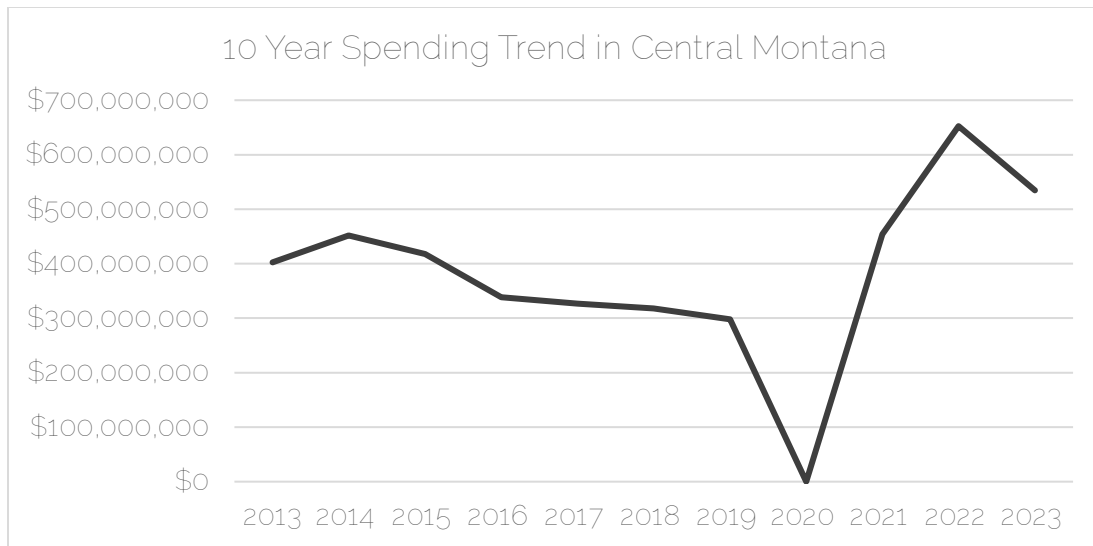
With a renewed focus on growth, Central Montana will rely on research to make decisions, utilize the talent of our partners to implement strategies, and work to make Central Montana Tourism an industry leading organization that supports the regional travel industry.

RESEARCH

Over the past 10 years, Central Montana has had inconsistent visitation patterns in the region. The region saw the bust and boom of COVID-19, however, there was a 10% decline in 2024 against 2023, and a 28% decline against pre-pandemic 2019 visitation.



Visitor spending has been in a general decline over the past 10 years. Spending data comes from the Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research and averages the spending over 2 years of data, so 2022 includes 2021 data, which would account for the increase in travelers in 2021. In 2023, we saw an 18% decline in total spending compared to 2022, which follows with the visitation trend.



*no data available for 2020, due to COVID-19

In 2024, Central Montana attracted 2.4 million visitors, a decline of 17%, contributing \$534 million in tourism revenue. Central Montana visitors arrive from nearly every location however, the top 10 stays pretty consistent. 57% of our total visitation came from these top 10 destinations:

1. Alberta 11%
2. Texas 8% (↑ from #5 last year)
3. Washington 7%
4. Minnesota 5% (↓ from #2 last year)
5. California 5% (↑ 5 spots from #10)
6. Idaho 5% (↑ from #9)
7. Colorado 4%
8. North Dakota 4%
9. Nebraska 4% (first time in the Top 10!)
10. New York 4% (first time in the Top 10!)

We lost Florida and Wisconsin from the Top 10 this year, who accounted for 179,280 and 149,400 visitors respectively. Even with the decline in visitation, we saw growth in visitation from California at 39%, Idaho at 39%, Texas at 33%, Colorado at 11%, and North Dakota at 11%.

It could be said that the travel industry in Central Montana hasn't yet stabilized since COVID-19, although major markets within the Region have and visitation hasn't shown consistency in 10 years. Current dynamics between Canada and the U.S. could influence visitation from Alberta, one of the region's key source of visitors. With a focus on establishing a growth trend for visitation and spending, the potential impacts of reduced international tourism and economic uncertainty could impact our efforts.

89% of visitors spending this past year occurred across these six categories:

1. 33% on Fuel
2. 19% on Lodging (↑ from #3)
3. 17% on Dining + Drinking (↓ from #2)
4. 8% on Groceries
5. 6% on Outfitters
6. 6% on Shopping

With total spending down 18% year over year, Central Montana saw 21% increase in spending in Fuel and 21% increase in Lodging spending. The increases can be attributed to an increase in room rates and the price per gallon of fuel.

Typically, the Central Montana traveler is a couple, 55-74 years old and 69% have been to Central Montana previously. The top 5 activities visitors engage in are:

1. Scenic driving (60%, ↑ 9% from last year)
2. Day hiking (53%, ↑ 23% from last year)
3. Car/RV camping (33%, unchanged from last year)
4. Wildlife watching (33%, ↓ 18% from last year)
5. Nature photography (29%, ↓ 12% from last year)

Historically, visitors have arrived and continue to do so through the following means:

1. Car/ Truck at 67%, ↓1%
2. RV/Trailer at 20%, ↑2%
3. Air at 11%, ↑3%

Tourism trends in the region show consistency in how visitors arrive, where they come from, and the activities they enjoy. While spending patterns across categories remain steady, the overall amount spent has varied significantly year to year, and the number of visitors has been steadily declining since 2021.

STRENGTHS OF CENTRAL MONTANA

Rich Historical and Cultural Heritage

Central Montana is home to numerous historical sites, including Lewis & Clark landmarks, Native American attractions, and the Charlie Russell Museum.

Natural Beauty and Outdoor Activities

The region offers diverse landscapes from plains to 9 island mountain ranges, providing opportunities for hiking, fishing, birding, and exploring the 150+ public land sites.

High Rate of Repeat Visitors

A significant percentage of visitors (69%) have visited Central Montana before, indicating a strong loyalty and satisfaction with the destination.

Authentic Rural Experience

The small towns and rural communities offer a genuine Montana experience, friendly locals and rich culture.

Uncrowded

Visitors will not experience wait times or require advance reservations, allowing for a more relaxed and enjoyable visit.

WEAKNESSES OF CENTRAL MONTANA

Insufficient Development

Despite the abundance of museums, historic sites, and other cultural attractions, many of these assets lack the necessary infrastructure to accommodate tourists year-round. These issues are primarily centered around staffing, operating hours, continued funding, and the physical condition of the buildings. Some attractions struggle to support visitors even during peak seasons.

Seasonality

Tourism in Central Montana is highly seasonal, with peak visitation during the summer months, leading to challenges in maintaining year-round employment and economic stability.

Perception of Limited Activities

There is a prevailing sentiment among tourists that Central Montana offers limited attractions, primarily consisting of agricultural landscapes and constantly blowing wind.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CENTRAL MONTANA

Development of Off-Season Tourism

By promoting shoulder season activities such as Astrotourism, skiing, snowmobiling, and hot springing, Central Montana can attract visitors year-round and reduce seasonal dependency.

Cultural and Heritage Tourism

Leveraging the region's rich history and cultural sites can attract niche markets interested in Agriculture, Native American History, and Military sites.

Park-to-Park Travel: Central Montana's prime location between Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks offers a chance to attract passing tourists, boosting local attractions and the economy.

Affordability

Central Montana's affordability and lack of overcrowding make it an attractive destination, offering reasonably priced lodging, dining, and activities.

THREATS TO CENTRAL MONTANA

Economic Instability

Economic downturns, political instability or global events such as pandemics can significantly reduce funding and visitor numbers, impacting the local economy.

Competition from Other Destinations

Central Montana faces competition from other regions and states that offer similar attractions and experiences.

Resident Attitudes

Negative perceptions of tourism among residents can lead to resistance against tourism development and impact the overall visitor experience.

BRAND

The Explore Bigger Brand was adopted in March 2024. Our brand states that Central Montana is where the views are big, and the experiences are even bigger. Whether a history buff, adventure junkie, avid traveler, or family of four, Central Montana's iconic location paralleled with its rugged past and charming hospitality can only mean one thing – a true Montana experience. Trekking after Lewis & Clark, discovering the cowboy artist, casting a line along the Missouri River, grabbing a microbrew, veering into the Milky Way – Central Montana's best kept secret is that you can have it all!

As the literal centerpiece of Montana exploration and spread across a storied landscape and 98 communities, adventure looms larger, history reaches further, culture runs deeper, and each

moment is better than the last. Rooted in unfiltered experiences is a real Montana with less standing in line and more standing in awe.

Our Brand Values guide our efforts to share with visitors that Central Montana is:

- Centerpiece to experience everything Montana has to offer
- Big region with diverse landscapes, authentic communities, and fresh opportunities for adventure
- Enriching lives through history, culture, and nature
- Experience a rugged history where it happened and where it lives on today
- Connect to something bigger and renew your perspective on the world
- Real Montana – with rough edges, humble charm, and unspoiled beauty
- Enough space and opportunities to explore in whatever direction and style you prefer
- Easy to visit – less people and less money for a true Montana experience
- Where time slows down – Unplug from the everyday and be fully present to discover your story

In practice, the brand shows Central Montana is full of life and gives visitors realistic tools to make their dreams a reality.

CREATIVE

Central Montana's creative approach will continue to be quality visuals that reinforce the Explore Bigger Brand goals of:

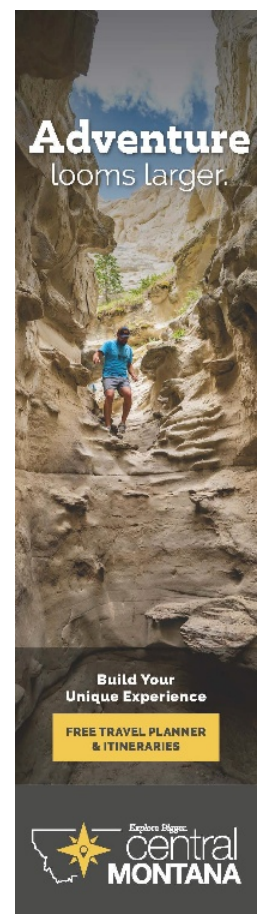
- Bold. Confident while staying humble
- Modern. Fresh appeal with a foundation of traditional Montana
- Inviting. Casual and comfortable
- Accessible & Welcoming
- Simple. Uncomplicated but still unique
- Aspirational. Imaginative with realistic tools and resources
- Lively. Impactful and full of life

The visual assets will feature people engaged with unique, small communities, authentic experiences, and raw beauty and give the audience an opportunity to see themselves engulfed by Central Montana.

Our messaging will lead with clever headlines that convey our region is an authentic and unspoiled gateway to diverse landscapes, rich history, and humble charm, embodying the essence of 'Real Montana'. This year, in response to the uncertainty of federal budgets, Central Montana will include Leave No Trace messaging to educate visitors about how to visit, what to expect (like lack of cell services), to be respectful (don't feed or pet the wildlife) and be prepared (such as weather changes quickly and impacts road conditions). This messaging will help keep the outdoors pristine for the next visitor, as the availability of staff to clean vault toilets and do trail maintenance could be limited.

MARKETS

Central Montana Tourism will use an audience first approach, when available through specific media, that uses artificial intelligence and tracking capabilities of the internet to place paid media in front of targeted audiences wherever they are geographically. Targeted ads using geographic,



behavioral, keyword, artificial intelligence, and retargeting parameters create a smart funnel to aid in constant monitoring and optimization to improve performance.

On media placements where audience first approaches aren't available, Central Montana will target the following geographic markets:

- Lethbridge, Alberta
- Calgary, Alberta
- Medicine Hat, Alberta
- Boise, Idaho
- Twin Falls, Idaho
- Denver, Colorado
- Seattle, Washington
- Spokane, Washington
- Grand Forks, North Dakota
- Salt Lake City, Utah
- Cheyenne, Wyoming
- Billings, Montana
- Missoula, Montana
- Helena, Montana
- Great Falls, Montana
- Bozeman, Montana

Demographic and Psychographic

- Household income \$100,000+
- Retired couples
- Families
- Solo travelers
- Millennials
- Adventurers
- Cultural Enthusiasts
- Nature Lovers
- Local-centric

These markets are informed by previous Central Montana paid media campaigns that have had high rates of engagement, Central Montana organic website visits, and visitor market growth trends.

OBJECTIVES, TACTICS, AND METRICS

For FY26, Central Montana will be focused on the following objectives, that will use specific tactics, and measure success based on identified metrics.

Objective 1: Increase visitation to and around Central Montana

1.1 Paid Media

Central Montana will review previous placements for performance and use that to inform specific media placements. Our media plan will:

- Leverage Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks
- Focus on itineraries that will facilitate travel throughout the region
- Prioritize placements with video assets
- Enhance budget with partner funding
- Consider placements that provide sole focus to Central Montana's message
- Look for opportunities that allow for articles about Central Montana
- Produces quality return on investment

To support the development of a new owned channel, a modest budget will be allocated to gaining Pinterest followers. Experimental ad placements will identify effective strategies while targeting Pinterest's largest demographic. This initiative aims to maximize engagement potential and evaluate the platform's effectiveness in reaching and growing our target audience.

Central Montana has historically partnered to develop marketing efforts that take travelers through multiple locations in Montana. We will continue to support these developed assets through targeted media plans that will leverage our budget with additional funding from each initiatives partner.

a. Dinosaur Trail

Central Montana Tourism will work with Southeast Montana, Yellowstone Country, and Missouri River Country to place paid media that will drive interest to MTDinoTrail.org, which will continue to be hosted by Central Montana.

b. Trail to the Stars

Central Montana Tourism will work with Southeast Montana and Missouri River Country to place paid media that will increase interest in shoulder season travel for night sky viewing with information and resources found at TrailToTheStars.com.

c. Great Wide Open

Central Montana Tourism will work with Southeast Montana, Yellowstone Country, and Missouri River Country to place paid media that will focus on the diversity of landscapes available through scenic drive itineraries found at MontanasGreatWideOpen.com.

Central Montana will continue to take advantage of partnership placements with Montana Department of Commerce that match our strategies.

1.2 Owned Media

Central Montana will employ a strategy that both builds up local support and provides inspiration for both past and future travelers. Posts will incorporate more stories and reels with an "on the ground" focus. Posts will provide for cross-promotion with partners, as available.

a. Facebook

Central Montana's Facebook audience is 63,483 (as of 3-31-2025). Year to date growth on this platform has been -0.36%. This demonstrates a mature channel that is maintaining. The demographic breakdown for this channel is:

- 60% Female
- 40% Male

and the geographic audience seems well diversified with the top 3 audiences all coming from Montana with:

1. Billings at 2.8%
2. Great Falls at 2.8%
3. Helena at 2.1%

This past year, organic posts have been outsourced. Central Montana will move this effort back in-house and make organic posts on Facebook at an interval that will keep current followers engaged and attract new followers with posts such as:

- Stories of Central Montana posts
- Video based look around posts
- Food posts
- Trip idea posts
- Tips for visiting posts
- Event posts
- Resident Influencer posts – locals sharing where they like to go in Central Montana
- Business owner intro posts
- History Highlight posts

b. Instagram

Central Montana's audience on Instagram is 15,251. The profile page will be refined with updates to the about section and the highlights feature. Central Montana will continue to make organic posts at an interval that will keep current followers engaged and attract new followers with posts such as:

- Evocative landscape posts
- Tidbit Tuesday posts
- Game animal posts
- Activity posts
- Event posts
- How to posts
- Story posts
- Resident Influencer Posts – locals sharing where they like to go in Central Montana
- Itinerary snippet posts
- First person sharing posts
- Top list posts

This channel's audience grew -0.62% this past year and geographic and demographic breakdown for this channel is:

- 55.8% Female
- 44.2% Male

and again, the geographic audience seems well diversified with the top 3 audiences all coming from Montana with:

1. Great Falls at 5.4%
2. Billings at 3.5%
3. Missoula at 2.1%

c. YouTube

This channel has the most potential to grow with an audience of 334. It has experienced 4% growth year to date. The existing content will be restructured into playlists, and relevant videos will be renamed to align with the new Central Montana brand.

New content will include YouTube Shorts such as:

- Day in the life
- Top lists
- Local eats and treats
- Vertical landscapes with trending audio
- Community overviews

d. Pinterest

Central Montana will outsource establishing a presence on Pinterest by launching a dedicated account. As stated above, this effort will be supported by a modest paid media budget. Pinterest's largest demographic aligns closely with our website and social media audience data. This initiative aims to maximize engagement potential of our target audience.

e. Newsletter

Central Montana Tourism will leverage it's email database to deliver a monthly newsletter that highlights:

- Floating in July
- Food in August
- Hiking in September
- Ghost Towns in October
- Events in November
- Skiing in December
- Outdoor recreation and Plan for Vacation Day in January
- Warm Drinks in February
- Birding in March
- Wildflowers in April
- Museums in May
- Fairs in June

f. Website

The website requires around 14 hours a month in monthly maintenance to stay operational. That maintenance includes:

- Seasonal updates to main page
- New dates for events/event research
- Bad link checking and updates
- Updating libraries on the backend
- Bug fixes
- Updates to inquiry form
- Data feed updates

Ensuring a secure website continues to be a top priority for Central Montana and will be supported with annual security subscription that includes Bot and DDOS protection. Central Montana will invest in yearly security monitoring will includes weekly checks on attacks, DDOS, bots and other threats.

A two-phase restructuring of the website has started and will continue, if additional funds become available. In Phase 1, the website will undergo the following changes:

- removal of submenus from the menu bar
- removal of the video section
- creation of a partner resource section
- consolidate trip ideas into a primary itinerary page
- centralize assets of military-market interest
- centralize Native American assets

and it is expected to be completed in FY25.

If additional funds become available, Phase 2 will include:

- New features will be added to the website to aid visitor planning such as trip planning and itinerary plug-ins to the website.
- Scenic Drive Content will be built out using video assets.
- Enhance and redesign Agritourism presence.
- Creation of a Food + Drink page accessed by the menu bar
- Creation of a Welcome page, integrating the existing Connect and Visitor Services sections

Events will be added to the website as soon as they are found. This is an effort we will look to bring in house.

Central Montana will develop and offer guests the opportunity to develop blogs as a way to keep content fresh on our website and provide content to share through our other owned channels. Blog content could include:

- First Person sharing
- How To's
- Tips
- Top lists
- What to expect

f. Travel Planner

A complete redesign of the Travel Planner is underway and will be finished this year. The Travel Planner has remained relatively unchanged for over 10 years, outside of updating a spread or photos. The new design will be photo heavy and require a significant investment in new assets.

Due to leadership transitions beginning in 2021, and natural changes in consumer behavior for printed materials, the printing has been declining, and distribution of travel planners has been inconsistent, outside of Certified Folder.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Ordered	85,000	0	75,000	65,000	50,000
Certified Folder Distribution	67,000	0	65,000	55,000	40,000
Bulk Distribution	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	1,485*
Individual Distribution	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	1,326*

*as of 2-28-2025

The travel planner will continue to be printed and then distributed through Certified Folder to traveler interest brochure racks on the Yellowstone and Glacier routes, bulk mailed through Printing Center USA, and mailed individually internationally or to domestic travelers who are unable to wait for bulk mailing.

Tracking of distribution will be done through a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to provide better tracking and management of inquiries.

1.3 Earned Media

Central Montana Tourism will consider hosting worthwhile influencers and travel writers, preferably in partnership, however, if necessary, in their entirety. Specifically, Central Montana would like to host a travel writer or influencer to highlight loop itineraries in partnership with Great Wide Open.

1.4 Expand Photo and Video Assets

Due to leadership transitions beginning in 2021, the photo and video assets Central Montana has are old, disorganized, and well used.

Historically, photo selection was done by committee which was unfocused and rarely provided the visual assets needed to match owned and paid media strategies. Images were properly secured,

however, not labeled and organized to allow the searcher to know who the photographer is, its use rights, or what and where the subject matter was.

Photos and videos will be secured by dedicated shoots, through user-generated requests, using CrowdRiff, and purchasing directly from artists. All photos secured by Central Montana will be used for all Central Montana's efforts.

Central Montana will develop a naming convention and process for securing photos. In order to make the historic assets we have useable; an intern or volunteer will be considered to do renaming and organizing in accordance with established processes.

Central Montana Tourism will capitalize on opportunities to leverage any photo and video work our partners are doing, contributing to their costs to develop when the work aligns with the assets we are looking to capture.

1.5 Itinerary Development

Central Montana will create two new itineraries. One itinerary will highlight the areas connected to Havre and Chinook. Another will focus on the areas of Lewistown and Winifred. These two new itineraries will accompany the four other itineraries that have been developed and are being used in our paid media strategies. Landing pages will be mocked up and then developed for each.

Objective 1 Metrics for Success

1. Grow Visitation into Central Montana by 2%
2. Grow Facebook Audience by 1%
3. Grow Instagram Audience by 1%
4. Grow YouTube Audience by 5%
5. Establish an audience of 300 on Pinterest
6. Generate a Click-Through-Rate of 1.5% across campaigns

Objective 2: Develop and support community tourism efforts through partnerships

2.1 Cooperative Grants

Central Montana will make grants available for communities and promote the opportunity with media releases and partner communications. Printed handout support pieces will be developed to drive traffic to the resources.

2.2 Digital Marketing Joint Venture

Central Montana will provide opportunities for a matched joint venture digital marketing campaign and promote the opportunity with media releases and partner communications. Printed handout support pieces will be developed to drive traffic to the resources.

2.3 Ambassador Training

Using resources provided by the Resiliency Grant through the Economic Development Administration, Central Montana will develop an Ambassador Training Program that teaches frontline staff how to interact with tourists effectively and keep them spending dollars within the region. The program adopts a "zoom out" approach, encouraging staff to keep tourists within the town, then the region, and ultimately, the state. Central Montana Tourism hopes to serve 2,500 employees with this training.

The asynchronous online training course will consist of four modules:

- Customer Service 101

- Emergency Language
- Central Montana
- A Highlight of Montana.

The first two modules will concentrate on general customer service skills, while the latter two will be specific to Montana. Interactive activities and gamification will be incorporated to keep staff engaged and continue learning.

To encourage completion, an incentive program will be implemented for staff who complete the training. Participants will not only receive a certification for their resumes but also be eligible for a reward, such as gift cards, discounts at local businesses, a weekend trip or entries into prize drawings.

In promoting the course, Central Montana's vast size presents challenges in connecting with businesses, especially those offline. A comprehensive marketing strategy will combine direct mail, digital ads, chamber partnerships, radio spots, and newsletters to promote the free training program, ensuring a comprehensive reach in the region.

Face-to-face onboarding sessions will also reach small, remote communities, guiding employers and staff in starting the program. Travel, venues, printed materials, and refreshments will support efforts, crucial for reaching towns where most populations are under 100 residents.

Capturing the necessary content for the course will serve multiple purposes beyond the training program. The images and videos collected will be repurposed across various platforms, enriching itineraries, showcasing communities on owned media channels, enhancing website content, featuring in the travel planner, and creating YouTube videos. This approach maximizes the value of the resources gathered and extends their impact.

2.4 Travel Show Stipend

Central Montana will offer a \$500 travel stipend to travel industry partners who attend a travel show to display and distribute travel planners. Partners will also be required to collect names and emails of people stopping by the booth and share the list with Central Montana for Central Montana marketing purposes.

2.5 Manage Digital Presence

Central Montana Tourism will continue to review potential referral sites that include information links about Central Montana, such as VisitMT.com, Lewis & Clark Trail, for accuracy and request edits/updates/additions as appropriate.

Objective 2 Metrics for Success

1. Receive 10 Cooperative Grant Applications
2. Secure 7 Digital Marketing Joint Venture Partners
3. Provide 4 Trade Show Stipends

Objective 3: Enhance the Appeal of the Region

3.1 Highlight Native Assets

Native American assets will be consolidated to a newly created page dedicated to our Native American heritage on the website, if additional funds become available, if additional funds become available.

3.2 Military History

Military assets will be consolidated to a newly created page dedicated to Military history on our website, if additional funds become available.

3.3 Forts

An episodic podcast series will be produced highlighting each fort in Central Montana, bringing to life the past through storytelling, with a landing page developed to support the fort assets within the region, if additional funds become available. If more funds become available, Central Montana will work with partners to establish QR code signage at each fort for visitors to scan to learn the stories of the fort they are at.

3.4 Agritourism

This broad-based area includes a variety of businesses: wedding venues, short-term rentals, farm stands/U-picks, guided hunting, camp hosts, work experiences, tours and more. This has been a focus of Central Montana's for several years. Historically, we've centralized the Agritourism assets, which doesn't include much beyond County Fairs, Farmer's Markets, and farm-to-table events. We've developed video assets on agricultural crops and the finished products they create.

When it comes to the future of an Agritourism strategy, Central Montana has determined it needs to have Agritourism experiences to promote, consistently, beyond events. Without strong leadership at the State Level to support a development program which aids producers in creating a product, along with regulations that make securing insurance for these endeavors reasonable and that this kind of operation enhancement will not adjust their property tax designation, this is just a concept that has merit but lacks a specific strategy to do more.

Central Montana Tourism will data mine AbundantMontana.com to incorporate information about specific businesses with specific experiences and add them to a redesigned Agritourism section of the website, if additional funds become available.

Central Montana will revisit this effort in the future when the State of Montana has a development strategy that Central Montana can support.

3.5 Astrotourism

Central Montana will highlight local events hosted by astronomy organizations on owned media channels. Central Montana will also continue to update astronomical events on the website, if additional funds become available.

Objective 3 Metrics for Success, dependent on finding additional funds.

1. Establish a baseline time-on-page metric for Native American, dependent on funding
2. Establish a baseline time-on-page metric for Military, dependent on funding
3. Establish a baseline time-on-page metric for Forts, dependent on funding
4. Establish a baseline time-on-page metric for Astrotourism, dependent on funding
5. Establish a baseline time-on-page metric for Agritourism, dependent on funding

Objective 4: Optimize the Organization

Central Montana will manage all efforts to maximize effectiveness and efficiency. This includes evaluating partnerships, securing support services as needed, adhering to contracts, continually refining processes, maintaining financial records that clearly account for expenses and revenue, and adjusting as necessary to make the best use of funds, and staff and volunteer time. As part of this,

Central Montana will pursue funding to support specific projects as appropriate, that could potentially include:

- assessments
- feasibility studies
- downtown revitalization
- infrastructure
- signage

4.1 Support Agency Collaboration

Central Montana will continue to conduct monthly agency partner meetings to enhance project efficiency, encourage open communication, and optimize the use of marketing funds

4.2 Develop and Maintain Relationships

Central Montana will develop and maintain partners across the region to aid in the implementation of strategic priorities, annual objectives, and keeping apprised of local travel industry needs.

a. Board Communication

The Tourism Director will provide updates to the Board of Directors with a Friday Finish newsletter. This email will contain progress on objectives and strategic priorities, relevant travel industry updates, legislative actions, and support requests.

b. Partner Communication

Central Montana will deliver a monthly newsletter to our partner database that will include organizational news, regional events, opportunities, and relevant industry topics.

c. Media Communication

Central Montana will provide media releases to our media database on topics related to community funding opportunities and director openings.

4.3 Maintain Necessary Reporting

Ensure timely and accurate reporting to maintain compliance, transparency, and accountability with the State of Montana and stakeholders.

4.4 Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Central Montana will begin tracking inquiries and partners in a CRM. We will keep our data inside Great Falls Montana Tourism's CRM, iDSS, to reduce cost and implementation.

4.5 Maintain Partner Website

Central Montana Staff will update the partner website with links to agendas and minutes and look for ways to add more resources to support partners and ensure transparency with operations.

Objective 4 Metrics for Success

1. Deliver 12 Friday Finish Newsletters
2. Deliver 12 Partner Newsletters
3. Grow Partner Database by 5%

Objective 5: Share the Value of Tourism

5.1 Elected Official Outreach

Central Montana Tourism will share the importance of the travel industry within the region and how the regional travel industry differs from other regional travel industries. This will be done with direct

communication and by co-hosting an elected officials reception for the elected officials within the region, with Great Falls Montana Tourism.

5.2 Director Call to Action

Central Montana will send email notices to the Board of Directors regarding important upcoming legislative action that impacts the regional travel industry.

5.3 Annual Report

Central Montana Tourism will develop an annual report that will share data on the health of the travel industry and the progress of the organization towards its metrics.

BUDGET

In the provided budget, you will see three different revenue streams, Lodging Facility Use Tax, Lodging Facility Sales Tax, and EDA Grant. Lodging facilities in Montana collect 8% in lodging taxes.

- 4% Lodging Facility Sales Tax
- 4% Lodging Facility Use Tax

The Lodging Facility **Sales** Tax is distributed, according to 15-68-820:

- 3% Montana General Fund
- 1% Historical Assets
 - 7% Capital Development Building Program
 - 6% Montana Heritage Center Operations
 - 6% Historic Preservation Grants
 - 6% State Special Revenues
 - 68.5% Department of Commerce
 - 24% Regionals & CVBs (new funding for Central Montana this year)
 - 7% Fish Wildlife, and Parks
 - 0.5% Tribal Economic Development

The 1% Historical Assets was added to build the new Montana Heritage Center in Helena in 2019 with SB 338. Once that was constructed, the bill directed the 1% to be distributed as seen above.

The Lodging Facility **Use** Tax is distributed, according to 15-65-121:

- 59.5% Montana Department of Commerce, Destination Montana
 - 43% Promotion
 - 22.5% Rural Tourism
 - 23% Grants
 - 6.5% Revolving Loan Programs and Tourism Assistance
 - 5% Collaboration with Office of Economic Development
- 22.5% 6 Geographic Regions & 21 CVBs
- 6.5% Fish, Wildlife & Park's Parks
- 2.7% or \$1 million (whichever is less) MT Heritage Preservation Commission
- 2.6% Historical Interpretation of Historical Society
- 2.5% Institute of Tourism & Recreation Research
- 1.4% Aquatic Invasive Species
- 1% Historical Society
- 0.5% Tribal Tourism
- 0.1% Department of Justice (created in SB 522)
- 0.7% Department of Revenue Tax Admin + State Employee Reimbursement

The grant funding comes from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, through the Montana Department of Commerce to support the tactics adopted by the organization through the Resiliency Plan developed for the Montana Department of Commerce by Coraggio Group. This grant started November 2024 and will end September 2026.

The shared expenses are denoted in the budget with an asterisk. The shared expenses are allocated at 27%, using the personnel allocation methodology, and will be paid as a one-time management payment to Great Falls Montana Tourism, except for the professional fees. The shared professional fees will be paid monthly, as a reimbursement with attached invoices, along with all other direct expenses to include personnel and travel.

Central Montana Tourism Budget
July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026
Adopted 4-10-2025

		FY26		FY25	FY25 Undistributed	EDA Grant	Total		
Income									
1	Lodging Facility Use Tax	\$534,939	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$534,939		
2	Lodging Facility Sales Tax	\$0	\$34,236	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$34,236		
3	Grants	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$125,000	\$125,000		
Total Income		\$534,939	\$34,236	\$0	\$0	\$125,000	\$694,175		
Expenses									
4	Admin Personnel	\$53,173	\$6,847	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$60,020		
5	Marketing Personnel	\$56,550	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$56,550		
Total Personnel		\$109,723	\$6,847	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$116,570	17%	42%
Administration									
6	Rent*	\$3,240	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,240		
7	Utilities*	\$1,350	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,350		
8	Maintenance*	\$1,215	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,215		
9	Supplies*	\$5,875	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,875		
10	Meeting Expesne	\$3,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,000		
11	Postage*	\$605	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$605		
12	Insurance	\$1,300	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,300		
13	Professional Fees*	\$14,188	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$14,188		
13a	ggo Preperation	\$2,800	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,800		
13b	Annual Plan	\$2,200	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,200		
14	Professional Development	\$3,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,500		
Total Admin		\$39,273	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$39,273	14%	11%
15	Paid Media	\$156,900	\$27,389	\$0	\$0	\$25,000	\$209,289		
15a	Joint Ventures	\$2,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,500		
15b	Great Wide Open	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000		
15c	Dino Trail	\$5,800	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,800		
15d	Trail to the Stars	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000		
15e	Management & Production	\$40,544	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$20,000	\$60,544		
15f	Campaign Landing Pages	\$3,300	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,300		
15g	Owned Media	\$7,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$7,500		
16	Marketing Resources	\$3,304	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,304		
16a	Constant Contact	\$4,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,500		
17	Memberships	\$2,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,500		
17a	IEDC*	\$675	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$675		
17b	DMA West*	\$312	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$312		
18	Subscriptions	\$3,663	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,663		
18a	iDSS*	\$1,755	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,755		
19	Earned Media	\$500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$500		
20	Opportunity	\$500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$500		
21	Photo & Video Assets	\$12,588	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$57,000	\$69,588		
22	Destination Development	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		
22a	Native	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		
22b	Military	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		
22c	Forts	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		
22d	Agritourism	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		
22e	Astrotourism	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		
23	Visitor Guide	\$35,203	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$35,203		
23a	Printing	\$33,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$33,000		
23b	Distribution	\$5,800	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,800		
24	Programs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$15,000	\$15,000		

24a	Co-op Marketing Grants	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000
24b	Digital Advertising	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000
24c	Trade Show Program	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,000
25	Research	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
26	Website	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
26a	Maintenance	\$15,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$15,000
26b	Security	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,000
26c	Management	\$2,640	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,640
26d	Event Management	\$3,960	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,960
27	Education/Outreach	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
27a	Travel	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$8,000	\$10,000
27b	TAC/Gov Con	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,000
27c	Voices of Montana Tourism	\$2,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,500
28	Reserves	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Program		\$385,943	\$27,389	\$0	\$0	\$125,000	\$538,332
Total Expenses		\$534,939	\$34,236	\$0	\$0	\$125,000	\$694,175
Net Profit		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

78% 47%

*shared expenses